THE

ROMANS UNDER THE EMPIRE.

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HISTORY

OF THE

ROMANS UNDER THE EMPIRE.

BY

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HISTORY

OF THE

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CHAPTER XLVII.

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Royal children educated at Rome. A. D. 37. A. U. 790.

THE son of Philip, king of Macedon, could find among the free citizens of the Grecian republics no youth of equal rank to compete with him in the games of Olympia, and the heir of an Augustus or Tiberius might already disdain the companionship of the children of Roman knights and senators. But the capital of the world was now frequented by the scions of many royal families. The children of de-

pendent sovereigns, invited to receive a Roman education, were retained there as pledges for their parents' fidelity; the pretenders to disputed thrones were encouraged to lay their claims before the emperor in person, and allowed to wait year after year for his final determination. A distinguished society of royal birth was thus collected together in the centre of republican equality, objects of remark and interest to those around them, to whom they communicated the ideas in which they had themselves been bred quite as fast as they imbibed the notions of their conquerors.

The awe with which these illustrious strangers might at first regard the institutions of their mighty mistress would naturally abate upon closer acquaintance with them. They found the Romans profoundly dissatisfied with the noble polity of their ancestors, discarding one by one the guarantees of their ancient freedom, and abandoning themselves to an ignorant admiration of the hollow splendour of Oriental despotism. What remained of the equal laws to which the vital forces of the conquering republic had been ascribed, appeared to their closer examination a mere shadow and pretence. Unable to appreciate the real energy which still moved under these antiquated forms, and the influence his old traditions still practically exerted on the Roman citizen, they learnt to look with complacent disdain upon the names of the senate and people. The Roman nobles, on the other hand, notwithstanding the public and official contumely with which they treated the most illustrious of their subjects, did not fail to admire in their hearts, with a blind reverence, the social prescriptions of eastern civilization, and were not slow to acquire, under the tuition of these gallant kings and princes, a glowing interest in the forms of Oriental monarchy.[1]

[1] Hor. *Sat.* i. 3. 12.: "Modo reges atque tetrarchas, Omnia magna loquens."

In this circle of distinguished foreigners the dynasties of Thrace and Cappadocia, of Egypt, Syria and Armenia, were all represented. But none among them were at this time so conspicuous as the members of the family of Herod the Judean, some of whom were domiciled for many years at Rome, and admitted to the most intimate acquaintance with the princes of the Cæsarean house. The imperial city was in fact at this period the common asylum of many unfortunate princes who would in their own country have been exposed to certain destruction from the horrid precautions of dynastic jealousy. I have not paused to enumerate precisely the members of his own family whom the tyrant of Judea had successively put to death. For many years his own children had been screened from his fury by the shadow of the imperial palace; when at last they had been restored, at his instance, to their native soil, they had been led speedily to the scaffold before the eyes of their indignant countrymen. But Augustus had again interfered to save the monster's grandchildren. Herodes, the son of Aristobulus, to whom the name of Agrippa had been given in compliment to the emperor's friend and minister, had been removed to Rome soon after his father's death, and with him his mother Berenice, and his elder sister Herodias.[1] These children united the blood of the rivals Salome and Mariamne: their nearest kinsmen had perished by the hands of the executioner, and the dominions which should have descended to their father Aristobulus and his brother Alexander had been divided among their uncles, the offspring of their grandfather's later marriages. At Rome, however, they

Herod Agrippa educated at Rome.

His mother Berenice and sister Herodias.

[1] Joseph, *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 6. 3.: *τὸν Ἀγρίππαν . . . . θαύματος ἀξιώτατον γεγενημένον, ὃς ἐκ πάνυ ἰδιώτου, καὶ παρὰ πᾶσαν δόξαν τῶν εἰδότων αὐτὸν, ἐπὶ τοσόνδε ηὐξήθη δυνάμεως.* xviii. 7. 1.: *Ἡρώδου τοῦ βασιλέως ὀλίγον πρὸ τῆς τελευτῆς Ἀγρίππας ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ διαιτώμενος.*

had been received with kindness. Antonia, the daughter of the triumvir, might remember the intimacy which had subsisted between her father and Herod, and she introduced the grandchildren of the king of Judea to the society of her own offspring by Drusus.[1] Herod Agrippa, born in the year 743, was but one year older than Claudius, the youngest of her children, with whom he was bred up in the closest intimacy. Both Herod and his sister inherited the ambitious spirit of their house. Upon the disgrace of Archelaus, and the vacancy of the throne of Judea, they might hope, through their interest with the rulers of the empire, to recover that portion of their ancestral inheritance. Notwithstanding, however, their intrigues and aspirations, the imperial government still retained its new acquisition, and showed no disposition to relinquish it. All their views were now covertly directed to saving some inferior province or principality from the wreck of their grandsire's sovereignty. But the schemes of the sister were thwarted by the indolence of her husband Philippus, while the golden hopes still cherished by the brother could only be revealed in the royal magnificence he displayed in a private station. The liberality with which he courted the chiefs of Rome, and led the career of prodigality among them, soon exhausted his resources and plunged him into desperate embarrassments. Nor could he retrieve his affairs by flattery of the emperor, for Tiberius, after the death of Drusus, refused to see any of the young prince's companions, whose presence would have renewed his sorrow.

Agrippa attaches himself to Caius Cæsar.

Philippus, the despised husband of Herodias, was a son of Herod the Great by a second Mariamne, who had easily resigned himself to the obscure privacy which, on account, perhaps, of his acknowledged imbecility of character,

[1] Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 7. 1.

had been assigned him on the division of his father's fortunes. The union of an uncle and a niece was abhorrent to Roman notions, and these, we may suppose, were still more offended when Herodias, impatient at the restraint imposed upon her by a consort she disdained, and solicited at the same time in marriage by another uncle, Antipas, presumed to repudiate Philippus by her own act, and connect herself with his half-brother.[1] Nevertheless, the favour of the imperial family now smoothed the way before her. She returned with her new husband to Samaria, the province which had been erected into a sovereignty in his favour, and obtained a subordinate appointment for her brother as governor of the city of Tiberias. But Agrippa did not long remain satisfied with this inferior position. The compassion of friends and kinsmen furnished him with funds for recommencing his career of politic extravagance at Rome, to which spot, in the decline of the reigning emperor, he once more betook himself.[2] He threw himself with renewed fervour into the pleasures and dissipations of his imperial patrons, drew off gradually from his early associate, the stupid and neglected Claudius, in whose prospects there was little to encourage him, and having to choose for an ally between the grandson and the grand-nephew of Tiberius, shrewdly attached himself to the latter.[3] Agrippa was twice the age of the stripling Caius: intelligent and active, and well versed in men and affairs, he soon acquired unbounded ascendancy over the young prince, now trembling in the uncertainty

[1] Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 6. 4. : *ἐπι συγχύσει φρονήσασα τῶν πατρίων.*

[2] Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 7. 3. : *ᾤχετο επ' Ἀλεξανδρείας πλέων· ἔνθα Ἀλεξάνδρου δεῖται τοῦ Ἀλαβάρχου μυριάδας εἴκοσι δάνεια αὐτῷ δοῦναι.* In this and other enterprises Agrippa was assisted by the good services of his wife Cyprus, the daughter of Phasael, a brother of Herod the Great.

[3] Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 7. 4.

of his own fortunes, and oscillating between the brightest hopes of power and the direst apprehensions. To Caius such a friend and mentor as the Jewish chief was invaluable. With Agrippa he passed the hours he could steal from the exacting jealousy of his uncle; from him he learnt the customs of the East and the simple machinery of Asiatic despotism, and imbibed a contemptuous disgust at the empty forms of the Republic, which served only, as he might in his blind inexperience imagine, to impede the march of government, while they contributed nothing to its security. He saw the loathed and abject Tiberius cowering in terror before a senate more abject in its terrors than himself, hiding his person from the sight of his subjects, feeling his way before every step, and effecting every end by intrigue and circumvention; while the petty lord of a Syrian plain or watercourse was every inch a king; while in the little town of Samaria, as he heard, every word of the tetrarch was obeyed without remonstrance or hesitation.

He inflames his imagination with the description of the splendour of Jerusalem,

But it was not in the simplicity of their despotic authority only that the sovereigns of the East so far transcended, he was assured, the princes and imperators of the rival hemisphere. Their wealth was more abundant, for all the possessions of their subjects were held only in dependence upon them; their splendour was more dazzling, for thirty generations of autocrats had striven to excel one another in the arts of magnificence and display. The capitals of the Oriental monarchs far exceeded in beauty and convenience the mass of dark and smoky cabins, in which the conquerors of the world were still doomed to burrow. But of all the cities of the East none equalled Jerusalem in splendour.[1] The great Herod had

[1] Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* v. 14.) calls Jerusalem, "longe clarissima urbium Orientis, non Judææ modo;" referring, it may be supposed,

adorned it with buildings, the magnificence of which outshone anything that could yet be seen at Rome. His theatres and gymnasiums, his forums and colonnades, were of the costliest materials and the noblest proportions. The precincts of the temple, which he rebuilt upon the holiest of Jewish sites, and enlarged with an outer court of much greater dimensions, might have contained all the fanes of Rome together. For fifty years marble had been piled upon marble in constructing it.[1] It occupied the whole summit of the hill of Moriah, next to Zion the most prominent quarter of the city, and rising upon enormous substructions from the deep valleys beneath, seemed like one immense citadel, the capital of the Jewish nation.[2] On the rival summit of Mount Zion, the highest elevation in Jerusalem, was planted the royal residence; no modest mansion for the most eminent of Roman senators, but a palace worthy of the name, an abode befitting an Oriental potentate, erected not by the contributions of the populace, but by confiscation of the estates of the great and powerful of the land. Surrounded with lofty walls and towers, springing, like the temple, from the depths of the gorges beneath, containing vast halls and ample corridors, its courts filled with trees and grass-plots, with reservoirs, fountains, and running streams, it was a palace, a villa, and a fortress all in one.[3] Zion and Moriah faced each other across the deep and narrow trench of the Tyropœon, and the temple and palace were connected by a bridge or causeway, across which the

to its external splendour rather than to its historic fame. Although this writer may be suspected of a wish to flatter his patrons Vespasian and Titus, its conquerors, his glowing language is sufficiently borne out by Josephus, Strabo, and Tacitus.

[1] Josephus dates the commencement of the third temple from the eighteenth year of Herod's reign, A. U. 734, B. C. 20, and it was not yet finally completed. Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xv. 11. 1., xx. 9. 7.

[2] Strabo, xvi. 2. p. 763.; Tac. *Hist.* v. 12.: "Templum in modum arcis." Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* v. 5., vi. 6.

[3] Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* v. 4. 4.

sovereign marched above the heads of his subjects, as the sun passes in the heavens from cloud to cloud. If the kings of Judea had abstained as yet from claiming the title of divinity, from regard to the fantastic scruples of their people, such at least was the honour to which the Eastern potentates might generally pretend, and such, should he ever be restored to authority in his native land, Agrippa himself already meditated to assume. The slaves of Asia acknowledged their sovereigns as the sole fountains of life and property; they regarded them as above the law or beside the law; no privileged ranks and classes of men, no traditions and prescriptions of accustomed usage, stood between them and their arbitrary caprices; uncles and nieces, brothers and sisters, sons and mothers might marry at their will[1]: to the multitude they held in fact the place of gods upon earth; to deny them the title might seem mere senseless prudery.

and the magnificence of its sovereigns.

Such was the sovereignty of which Agrippa talked, and such, when the associates conversed together on the future succession to the principate of Tiberius, was the sovereignty to which the young aspirant was encouraged to look. We shall trace throughout the brief career of Caius, the first despot or sovereign prince of Rome, the influence of the ideas which his friend thus opened to him. We are arrived at a period when the personal character of their ruler has come to exercise a decisive influence on the sentiments no less than on the welfare of the Roman people, and through them of the world at large. It becomes the more

Influence of these Oriental ideas.

[1] The steadfast abhorrence of the Romans for these irregularities is one of the finest traits in their character. Comp. Lucan, *Phars.* viii. 397.:

"Num barbara nobis
Est ignota Venus? . . . Epulis vesana meroque
Regia non ullos exceptos legibus horret
Concubitus . . . ."

important therefore to note the conditions under which that character was formed. Since the overthrow of the renegade Antonius, Rome had enjoyed a respite from the invasion of Asiatic principles and notions. Augustus had set up bulwarks against them which Tiberius had not failed to respect; it remained for the puerile selfishness of Caius, under tuition of the wily foreigner, to introduce into the city an element of disunion more fatal to her polity and manners than the arms of a triumvir or the edicts of an imperator. The prostitution of personal dignity by self-display in the theatre and circus; the assumption of the divine character, to the utter destruction of all remaining sense of religion; excessive extravagance in shows and buildings; indulgence of self and indulgence of the populace, together with savage oppression of the nobler classes; unstinted gratification of brutal ferocity;—all these are attributes of Oriental sovereignty, which Caius was first of the Roman emperors to exercise, but in which some of his successors rioted, if possible, even more furiously than himself.

Caius unsound both in mind and body.

Caius, now in the middle of his twenty-fifth year, was by nature more impressible than was usual with his hard and prosaic countrymen.[1] The poetical and rhetorical exercises to which he had been directed, without the compensating influence of severer training, which had been unkindly withheld from him, had imparted perhaps a certain flaccidity to his character, confirmed by the enervating voluptuousness in which he had been steeped from his cradle. His constitution was weakly. In childhood he had been subject to fits, and though he outgrew this tendency, and learnt to bear fatigue of body, he was not unfrequently seized with sudden faintings. Early indulgence in every caprice, and premature dissipation, had strained his nerves and

[1] Dion notes that Caius at the moment of Tiberius's death wanted five months and four days to complete his twenty-fifth year. lix. 6.

brain, till at last a temperament naturally excitable, and harassed by constant fever, seemed always to tremble on the verge of delirium. It was said of him, at least in his later years, that he never slept for more than three hours together. Through the weary darkness of the night he would toss in restless agitation on his bed, or pace with hurried and unequal strides the long resounding corridors, shouting impatiently for the dawn. His dreams were wild and terrible, and in his waking visions his mind seemed ever on the stretch with the vastness of its shadowy images, in which he fancied he beheld the great Spirit of the Ocean, and engaged in converse with him. The might and majesty of the Cæsarean empire, as of a Titan that defied the Gods, inflamed his perturbed imagination, his conceptions expanded like the welling visions of a dream, and his grasp of power was a fitful struggle to realize a sick man's nightmare.[1]

Agrippa arrested by Tiberius, and released on the accession of Caius.

While the germs of this unhappy temperament, so pitiable in a private man, so fearful in a ruler, were still undeveloped in his youthful frame, deep must have been the charm to Caius of his conversations with Agrippa, which revealed to him glimpses of a yet unknown world of splendour and enjoyment. But they were dangerous, as indeed every step, word, and look in his position was fraught with danger. It happened that the friends were one day taking the air together in a carriage, when the Judean took occasion to express his hope that no long time would elapse before the realization of their cherished wishes; that the sceptre would soon drop from the grasp of the aged emperor, and be placed in the hands of his nephew. But the charioteer listened as he drove, and reported the con-

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 50.: "Valetudo ei neque corporis neque animi constitit. Puer comitiali morbo vexatus, &c.: mentis valetudinem et ipse senserat . . . incitabatur insomnia maxime; neque enim plus quam tribus nocturnis horis quiescebat," &c.

versation to Tiberius. Agrippa was suddenly arrested and placed in confinement, where he remained, unheard and untried, for the six months which intervened before the emperor's final illness. Caius trembled at this disgrace, the prelude, as he might anticipate, to his own, and redoubled the servile compliances with which he paid court to the tyrant. Antonia, whose influence was still in the ascendant, averted the danger from her grandson, and succeeded in softening in some degree the rigour of Agrippa's captivity.[1] Tiberius was getting visibly weaker. The ministers of the imperial tyranny were on the watch, and at every symptom of his end approaching made some relaxation in their treatment of the prisoners, who at his death might suddenly be restored to liberty and power. The friends of Agrippa were not, it seems, prevented from visiting him, and some there were who were not afraid of doing so. One day a freedman entered his chamber with an air of mystery, and whispered in his ear in the Jewish language, *the Lion is dead.*[2] It seems that the premature report of the emperor's death had reached him. The captive understood his meaning, and cried aloud with joy. When the centurion who guarded him was admitted to a knowledge of the secret, he urged his prisoner to take a seat at his own table, and celebrate with festivity the event from which they both anticipated his speedy deliverance. But suddenly the news arrived of the emperor's unlooked-for recovery. He had quitted his residence, it was added; he had summoned his attendants; he was already on his way to Rome. Dire was the consternation in the prison, as at the same moment in the palace. The pleasant party was rudely broken up. Trembling for the consequences of his imprudence, the centurion sought to

[1] Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 7. 8

[2] Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 7. 10. : *συννεύσας πρὸς αὐτὸν γλώσσῃ τῇ Ἑβραίων, τέθνηκεν ὁ λέων, φησίν.*

compensate by redoubled violence for the indulgence he had shown his prisoner. He loaded Agrippa with chains, and threatened him loudly with death. The confirmation of the first report came opportunely to restore his equanimity, and to allow Agrippa to profit by the order which soon arrived from Caius for his release.

On the death of Tiberius, the people express their indignation against him.

But the alarm which had been excited by the premature announcement of the tyrant's decease was not universally allayed by this confirmation of the event. Too many still feared that it was only a device to discover the real sentiments of the people, and subject to a bloody punishment all who should venture to give utterance to the general satisfaction. Some condemned victims were awaiting in prison the expiration of the ten days' respite which the law allowed them; and it was believed, we are assured, (such was the horror of the times,) that when the death of Tiberius was announced, the gaolers, either refusing to credit it, or in default of authority for refraining, consigned those whose term had arrived, in spite of their cries and obtestations, to the hands of the executioner.[1] There is reason, indeed, to believe that this atrocity, a parallel to which has actually occurred in modern times, was merely a popular invention: but the report served to exasperate still more the fury of the multitude, which, on the assurance that the lion was really dead, burst out into wild exclamations of disgust and hatred. *Tiberius to the Tiber*, they cried, and called, it is said, for the hook and ropes to drag the body to the Gemoniæ and to the river, that the goddess Earth and the spirits of the buried

[1] Suet. *Tib.* 75. This story, which is given as a popular rumour, is opposed to the express declaration of Dion (lviii. 27.), that, on the first occurrence of Tiberius's illness, the condemned were respited to await the event, and is not entitled to much credit The parallel case alluded to is that of the last victims of Robespierre.

might not receive it into their holy keeping.[1] But this ebullition of feeling, if it has been truly represented to us, was not lasting: a calmer expression of popular disapprobation, which demanded that the remains should be hastily consumed at a distance, and not brought to Rome at all, was also speedily overruled; and it was left to the senate to decide, with the consent of the new chief of the state, how the body of the late emperor should be disposed of, and how his memory should be treated.[2]

The will of Tiberius is annulled by the senate.

If the populace of the city really entertained any vehement dislike of their late ruler, it was not for his cruelty, by which they had been little affected, but for the ungenial austerity of his government, at which they had long repined, and which they might expect to give away, under the sway of a gay and gallant youth, to an era of festivities and amusements. The senate, which had far more reason to hate the patron of Sejanus and the delators, comported itself at least with decent gravity. The announcement of the emperor's actual decease was brought to the fathers by Macro, in a letter from Caius. He was commissioned to present to them at the same time the testament of Tiberius; but while he desired in his new master's name that all the posthumous honours formerly assigned to Augustus, the public funeral, the confirmation of his acts, and the deification, should now be decreed to his successor, he declared that the dying man's disposition of his patrimony was the act of an incapable dotard, and required that it should be solemnly annulled. The legal validity

[1] Suet. *l. c.*: "Ut pars, Tiberium in Tiberim, clamitarent: pars Terram matrem, Deosque Manes orarent, ne mortuo sedem ullam, nisi inter impios, darent."

[2] The people demanded that the body should be consumed in the amphitheatre at Atella, the public place nighest at hand, instead of being brought to Rome; also that it should be *semiustulatum*, scorched and not burnt decently to ashes, as was usual with the cheap and hurried obsequies of slaves and criminals.

of this instrument, as we have seen, could extend only to the private property of the testator; but all felt how strong a claim it would constitute to a division of political sovereignty, and Macro might, perhaps, actually represent to the senators how incongruous it was to give a presumptive right to the empire to a stripling like the young Tiberius, who had not yet reached the age which entitled him even to a seat in their assembly.[1] The late emperor's wish to make his grandson and grand-nephew joint-heirs of all the property or power he might be able to bequeath was too generally known, perhaps, to admit of the suppression of his testament; but Macro was assured of the favour in which the child of Germanicus was held by the people, and he counted on certain means of overcoming whatever reluctance the fathers might have to cancel it.[2] The rush, indeed, of the populace into the Curia decided and hastened their resolution. The will was set aside; a public funeral was appointed; but the consideration of further honours for the deceased was postponed to a decree by which all the functions and dignities of empire were at once conferred upon Caius.[3]

[1] The idea that the two princes were left co-heirs of the empire was strongly impressed upon the minds of all our Greek authorities. See Dion, lix. 1.; Philo, *Leg. ad Cai.* 4. Josephus says that Tiberius recommended his grandson to Caius as his associate in power.

[2] Dion lix. 1.

[3] Suet. *Calig.* 14. This biography is headed in the editions of Suetonius with the name of Caligula, and I refer to it under that title: but it should be remarked that Suetonius in his text always calls this prince Caius or Caius Cæsar, and such is the appellation given him uniformly by Tacitus, Seneca, and Pliny, as well as the Greek writers generally. I need not say that such is also his designation on medals. Aurelius Victor, in his trifling abridgment of history, is perhaps the first writer who gives him the name of Caligula. This, as has been mentioned, was a mere nickname of the camp, and though it continued current there, the emperor himself always resented it: "Nec impune cessit primipilario quod Caligulam dixerat." Senec. *de Const. Sap.* 18. The later acceptance of the name is due perhaps to the careless epitomists, who wished to save themselves trouble in distinguishing between the various Cæsars who bore the prænomen of Caius.

Full of anxiety at the fortunes which were about to open upon him, the young emperor placed himself at the head of the mourning procession which conducted the remains of Tiberius from Misenum to Rome. The people streamed forth from the towns on the way and from the city itself to meet him, as the leader of a triumphal rather than of a funeral pageant. Along the roadside altars were decked for sacrifice, and steamed with incense; torches blazed and flowers were strown in profusion before him. Every joy and blessing were invoked upon his head, and voices were heard throughout the crowd addressing him with the most endearing appellations.[1] In the universal delight and anticipation of good days to come, the crimes and injuries of the dead tyrant were forgotten, and to the execution of the decree in his honour no resistance was offered. Though basking in the sunshine of popular favour, the behaviour of the young aspirant, for he could hardly yet feel secure of his position, was measured and discreet. As chief mourner at the imperial obsequies, he pronounced a funeral oration, the tone of which was sober and moderate, respectful alike to the deceased and to his people, nor unaccompanied with a decent tribute of tears. From the merits of Tiberius he turned with warmer enthusiasm to the exploits of Augustus and Germanicus, and traced to those sainted heroes of his line his own personal claims to the regard of the Roman people. From the forum the body was carried with the proper ceremonies to the Campus Martius for cremation, and the ashes finally enshrined in the Cæsarean mausoleum.[2] At the close of the solemnities, Caius presented himself in the senate-house, and addressed the fathers and others there assembled in a speech

Caius conducts the obsequies of Tiberius.

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 13.: "Super fausta omina sidus, et pullum, et pupum et alumnum appellantes."

[2] Suet. *Calig.* 15.; Dion, lviii. 28., lix. 3.

full of flattery and submissiveness. He declared himself the child or ward of the senators, prepared to share with them the toils and pleasures of office, and to guide all his actions according to their wise direction.[1] Nor did he fail to assume a tone of regret at being unable to accomplish the late emperor's wishes with regard to his infant grandson. *At his tender years,* he said, *he stands yet in need of tutors, teachers, and guardians; but I will be more than tutor, teacher, or guardian to him; I will be his father, and he shall be to me as a son.*[2] At the same time he scrupulously executed the will of Tiberius in every other particular. It comprised liberal donations to the prætorians and to the citizens generally: the former he doubled, the latter he increased by the sum which had been promised but never paid them, on his own assumption of the toga, together with the interest accruing. Nor were the police of the city, or the legions beyond the bounds of Italy, forgotten in this prudent liberality, which was still further enhanced by the payment of the bequests of Livia, which her parsimonious son had neglected to carry into effect.[3] For this and still greater profusion ample provision was found in the treasures accumulated by Tiberius, the sum of which was differently stated by the authorities of the day, but which, on the estimate of Suetónius, which is not the highest, may have amounted to twenty-one millions of our money.[4]

Liberal conduct of the new emperor. Nor were the liberal acts of the new emperor confined to this promiscuous munificence in gifts and largesses. He issued a general

[1] Dion, lix. 6.

[2] Philo, *leg. ad Cai.* 4.: ἐγὼ δὲ, ἔφη, παιδαγωγοὺς καὶ διδασκάλους καὶ ἐπιτρόπους ὑπερβαλὼν, ἐμαυτὸν ἤδη γράφω πατέρα, υἱὸν δὲ ἐκεῖνον.

[3] Suet. *Tib.* 51.; *Calig.* 16.; Dion, lix. 2.

[4] Suet. *Calig.* 37.: "Totum illud Tiberii Cæsaris vicies ac septies millies sestertium." Sestertia 27 × 100,000 = 2,700,000 = at 8*l.* the sestertium, 21,600,000*l.*

pardon to the occupants of the imperial prisons, and recalled the banished from their exile. The informations and pretended evidence relating to the treasonable practices which had been imputed to his mother and brothers, he burnt publicly in the forum, declaring at the same time that he had abstained from perusing them, and had not acquainted himself even with the names of the delators.[1] When a paper was presented to him which purported to divulge an intrigue against him, he rejected it with the exclamation that he had given cause of offence to no man.[2] He proscribed the most infamous ministers of vice, the creatures of the worst of the nobles, and as it was reported of Tiberius himself, expelling them indignantly from the city, and was with difficulty dissuaded from throwing them into the sea. The writings of Labienus, Cremutius, and Cassius Severus, which the senate had suppressed, were at his instance restored to circulation: it was for the interest, he declared, of every good prince that history should be written and read. He published the accounts of the state, after the example of Augustus, an example which Tiberius from indolence or reserve had neglected to follow. As regarded the judicial functions of the emperor, the behaviour of Caius was eminently popular, in abolishing the appeal to himself from the tribunal of the superior magistrates. Into the means and character of the senators he made no invidious inquisition; they had suffered enough under the Tiberian persecutions: but he revised strictly, though with no undue severity, the roll of the equestrian order, enriching it with the addition of many new members from the wealthiest classes of Italy and the provinces; and he added a fifth decuria to the bench of judices, which was overburdened with

1 Dion, lix. 6.

2 Suet. *Calig.* 15.: "Contendens, nihil sibi admissum cur cuiquam invisus esset."

its duties. Under his auspices many provincial communities received the gift of Roman citizenship.[1] The heir of the Drusi attempted, as Suetonius expresses it, to revive the Comitia for the election of magistrates; but his magnanimous policy was defeated by the indifference of the nobles to public office, for the candidates, it seems, were seldom more numerous than the places, or if a greater number at any time offered, they contrived to come to a private arrangement among themselves.[2] The centuries convened for the election found they had nothing to do, but go through the empty forms and disperse. After two years' trial, Caius resumed the plan of direct nomination recommended to him by his predecessors, and as far as the real substance went, the usage of popular election was finally suppressed. Such, together with the remission of the percentage on sales in Italy, an impost which, though trifling in its amount, seemed to trench on the cherished immunity of the conquering race, and many acts of liberality to individuals, were the beneficent measures which ushered in the reign of the new emperor.[3] His piety towards his own relations was not less conspicuous, nor did it serve less to recommend him to the regard of the citizens. Immediately after his first appearance in the senate, he hastened, amidst the prayers and vows of the people—for the weather was tempestuous—to

[1] See Agrippa's speech in Philo, *leg. ad Cai.* c. 36.: *φίλων ἐνίων πατρίδας ὅλης τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς ἠξίωσας πολιτείας.*

[2] Suet. *Calig.* 16.: "Tentavit et comitiorum more revocato suffragia populo reddere." Dion expresses no doubt a common and probably a just feeling of the injudiciousness of this attempted concession of political rights to a people who seemed incapable of using them discreetly: *τους δ' ἔμφρονας ἐλυπήσατο, ἐλογισαμένους ὅτι κἂν ἐπὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς αἱ ἀρχαὶ αὖθις γένωνται . . . . πολλὰ καὶ δεινὰ συμβήσεται.* lix. 9. Comp. Vell. ii. 124., cited above.

[3] These acts, which all belong to an early period in this reign, have been here brought together in one view, though some of them may date, perhaps, in its second year. The revival of the Comitia was made in 791: the first consulship of Caius was assumed without any pretence of election.

seek in person the ashes of his mother and brother in their desolate islands. Having collected these august remains, and carefully inurned them, he conveyed them in his own arms to Rome, ascending the river from Ostia with funereal pomp, and laid them in the imperial mausoleum, appointing at the same time an annual service in memory of the deceased. The name of the month September he changed to Germanicus, an alteration which was not destined to survive him, and conferred upon Antonia, through a decree of the senate, all the distinctions which the piety of Tiberius had before assigned to Livia.[1] Claudius, who had hitherto been left in the obscurity of the equestrian rank, he invited to assume the consulship in conjunction with himself, and saluted the young Tiberius, on the day of his claiming the toga, with the title of Prince of the Roman Youth. His natural sensibility prompted him, further, to demand honours for his three sisters, a thing unheard of under the Roman commonwealth. It was ordained that the sacramental oath of the citizens to the emperor should contain the words, *I will not hold myself nor my own children dearer than Caius Cæsar and his sisters*, and that every motion of the consuls in the senate should conclude with the invocation of a blessing upon him and them together.[2] All these measures were accepted with unbounded delight by the jubilant populace. When Caius assumed, at the instance of the senate, the collective honours of the empire, he had insisted on making a single exception, declining with the modesty of tender youth the appellation of Father of his Country.[3] This conduct the people regarded perhaps with satisfaction, as a tribute to the Nemesis which scans with evil eye the heights of human prosperity; nor were they less pleased, we may believe, at his refraining from pressing on the senate the con-

[1] Dion, lix. 3. [2] Suet. *Calig.* 15. [3] Dion, lix. 3.

firmation of Tiberius's acts. The name of the tyrant disappeared from henceforth from the public instruments, in which the titles and functions of succeeding emperors were recited.[1] The vulgar notion of Deity was that of a Being who presides with dignified interest over the sports and amusements of his creatures, and to such a character the gloomy recluse of Capreæ had, in the estimation of the Romans, no claim whatever. If the senate, with its usual servility, would have acquiesced in the apotheosis of a tyrant who had degraded and decimated it, the citizens interposed to forbid the honour, and Caius made no effort to enforce it. The enthusiasm with which the early promise of the new principate was received, might be estimated from the multitude of a hundred and sixty thousand victims which, it was computed, were offered in gratitude to the Gods in the course of the first three months. Its birthday, it was decreed, should be sanctified with the name and rites of the Parilia, as the era of the new foundation of the state.[2]

The first consulship of Caius.

The young man's personal defects and vices, of which some mention has already been made, were unknown, it must be observed, at this time to the mass of the citizens. The cunning and selfishness which we have already noticed in him, the ferocity which found pleasure, it is said, in the sight of torments and executions, his unworthy taste for the company of dancers and gladiators and for vulgar shows, the defects in his education, and his moral inaptitude for all elevating subjects of thought, had been concealed from the eyes of the Romans in the recesses of the palace. For five years his residence had been mostly confined to Capreæ. At a later period it was reported that, in spite of all his dissimulation, he had not been able to conceal the vileness of his nature from Tiberius himself, and the monster was supposed more than once to have re-

[1] Dion, lix. 9. [2] Suet. *Calig.* 14. 16.

marked, not without a grim satisfaction, that Caius lived for his own and all men's perdition, and that he was rearing a serpent for the Romans, and a Phaethon for the universe.[1] But if any vague rumours of this prince's faults reached the ears of the multitude, they were easily excused in a son of Germanicus, on the plea of inexperience and bad example. The Romans had yet to learn the horror of being subject to a master who had never been trained to mastery over himself. His accession to the principate was signalized, as we have seen, by unexpected moderation, by profuse liberality, and by some traits of generous feeling; but when on the calends of July, three months later, he assumed the consulship, he confirmed their warmest anticipations by an address to the senate, in which he exposed without reserve all the vices of his predecessor, and denounced them to general execration. At the same time he promised to conduct his own career on very different principles, and declared himself the devoted minister of the august assembly before him. The fathers, apprehensive that such auspicious sentiments might one day change, thought it possible to fix them by decreeing that the harangue which contained them should be annually recited in their presence. During the two months which followed Caius seems to have striven assiduously to redeem his pledge of good government. Untrained as he was, and immoderate alike in every caprice, he threw himself perhaps into this work with feverish impetuosity. The liberal and equitable measures connected with his name may be for the most part referred to this brief period, during which he placed himself in fact as well as in name at the head of affairs. Two summer months were honourably spent in a labour which was probably beyond his strength. On the arrival of the last

His devotion to business.

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 11.: "Exitio suo omniumque Caium vivere, et se natricem pop. Romano, Phaethontem orbi terrarum educare."

day of August, the anniversary of his birth, he proposed to exchange the duties of industry for those of festive hospitality. His popularity, which had gone on increasing from day to day, was crowned by the ardour with which, descending from the awful chair of state, he plunged into the full tide of the national amusements, by the splendour of the shows he exhibited, and the novelty as well as variety of the dissipations he provided. He professed to restore the golden age of Augustus, the age, as he imagined, of universal recreation, which had suffered a gloomy eclipse under the leaden sceptre of Tiberius. The consecration of a temple to the divine founder of the empire, which had been slowly completed by his successor, furnished a fitting memorial for the birthday of the reigning sovereign. The magnificence which was now displayed was such as had not been witnessed at least by two generations. The ceremony was conducted by Caius himself, in a triumphal robe, borne in a chariot drawn by six horses: after the completion of the sacrifices, a hymn was sung by a select chorus of noble children, whose fathers and mothers were both alive; a banquet was given, not to the senators only, but also to their wives and families, as well as to the mass of the citizens; the festival was followed by an entertainment of divers kinds of music, and by horse and chariot races, recurring in rapid succession through two days. Four hundred bears, and as many lions and panthers, were slaughtered in the amphitheatre; patrician youths enacted the game of Troy; while the emperor himself presided over these manifold sports, and sate benignly through them with his sisters by his side, and surrounded by the ministers of the Augustan hero-worship. That no citizen might be required to absent himself from a scene in which his prince condescended to take delight, the public offices were closed and business suspended, and even the term of private

His public entertainments.

mourning was abridged. Widows, provided at least they were not pregnant, might straightway marry without scandal. To set the spectators quite at ease, they were not required to make their obeisance to the emperor; they were even permitted to disencumber themselves of their sandals, as at a private entertainment, and to cover their heads for protection against the sun, as in the forum and the streets. This, it is said, was the first occasion of the use of cushioned benches at the games; but as yet this indulgence was confined to the senators only.[1]

He rushes into dissipation.

Such a festive inauguration of amusements long disused might be excused on the first celebration of an imperial birthday, at the outset of a young prince's reign, and at the close of a weary session of public business. But with Caius it was the opening of a new era of enjoyment from which he never afterwards desisted. Resigning in the third month the chair of magistracy he rushed for recreation into the wildest dissipations. While the consul suffectus supplied his place at the head of affairs, the emperor abandoned himself to a long holiday of uninterrupted amusement. His enthusiasm for the public spectacles was the frenzy of one just escaped from the dreary confinement of a hermitage. Soon sated with every fresh object, he sought renewed excitement in variety and strangeness. He introduced the novelty of nocturnal spectacles, at which the whole city was illuminated with lamps and torches. Money and viands, at his command, were thrown liberally to the populace. He indulged too in a giddy humour which was not always dignified. On one occasion, when he feasted the citizens at a gorgeous banquet, he was so pleased with the justice a certain knight did to the luxuries before him, that he ordered his own plate to be offered to him. A senator, who similarly gratified

[1] Dion, lix. 7.; Suet. *Calig.* 17.

him, was inscribed at once on the list of prætors. The games of the circus were continued, with occasional interludes, through the whole twelve hours of the day; and on some special festivals the arena was strown with cinnabar and borax, and the chariots driven by none under the rank of a senator.[1] But even these follies were less criminal than the vices and sensualities to which they led the way. If Caius desired that his people should riot without stint in the pleasures which had so long been grudged them, not less was he resolved to indulge himself to the utmost in the gratification of every sense. He let fall the mask, hitherto but loosely worn, of discretion and modesty, and revelled with furious appetite in the grossest voluptuousness of every kind. The consequence of these excesses was not slow to follow. The young man's weakly constitution was unable to bear the strain to which he subjected it, and in the eighth month of his delirious dream he was prostrated by a severe and dangerous illness. The warm sympathy which was now displayed for him, not in Rome only but throughout the provinces, shows how large a space the chief of the Roman state already filled in the interests of the vast population over which he seemed so conspicuously to tower. Multitudes crowded round the palace in which he lay, both by day and night, making anxious inquiries after his health. A citizen, Afranius Potitus, solemnly devoted his own life for the prince's preservation, and a knight named Atanius Secundus vowed to descend into the arena, and fight among the gladiators, in the event of his happy restoration. Such were the extravagances which found favour in that day of unreal and fan-

Caius falls sick. Despair of the people.

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 18. Pliny mentions this use of cinnabar (minium) and borax (chrysocolla). *Hist. Nat.* xxxiii. 27.: "Visumque jam est Neronis principis spectaculis arenam Circi chrysocolla sterni, quum ipse concolori panno aurigaturus esset." He describes these substances in xxxiii. 26. 37. foll.

tastic sentiment. The Romans themselves were not perhaps unconscious of the folly which they encouraged and applauded, and the story that Caius on his recovery compelled his devotees, the one to kill himself, the other to risk the chances of mortal combat, was possibly invented as an expression of the prevailing cynicism of the times.[1]

The account which has been preserved to us of the grief and dismay of the provinces at the prospect of the emperor's early loss is remarkable, not only as a testimony to the wide-spread interest in his person, but for the picture it presents of the general prosperity at this epoch. We must remember that the shadow of the Tiberian tyranny extended little beyond the immediate precincts of Rome and Capreæ, and though the description which follows is fantastically drawn, it seems to betoken an actual state of substantial and permanent well-being, not confined to a single locality, nor dependent on the life of an individual, but flowing from a well-organized and universal system of administration. *Who*, asks Philo, the Jewish philosopher of Alexandria, *was not amazed and delighted at beholding Caius assume the government of the empire, tranquil and well ordered as it was, fitted and compact in all its members, North and South, East and West, Greek and Barbarian, Soldier and Civilian, all combined together in the enjoyment of a common peace and prosperity? It abounded everywhere in accumulated treasures of gold and silver, coin and plate; it boasted a vast force both of horse and foot, by land and by sea, and its resources flowed in a perennial stream. Nothing was to be seen throughout our cities but altars and sacrifices, priests clad in white and garlanded, the joyous ministers of the general mirth; festivals and assemblies, musical contests*

Excitement and distress in the provinces.

[1] Dion, lix. 8, 9.; Suet. *Calig.* 14, 18.

and horse races, wakes by day and by night, amusements, recreations, pleasures of every kind and addressed to every sense. The rich, he continues, *no longer trampled upon the poor, the strong upon the weak, masters upon servants, or creditors on their debtors; but the independence of every class met with due respect; so that the Saturnian age of the poets might no longer be regarded as a fiction, so nearly was it revived in the life of that blessed era.* Such was the state of things at the accession of Caius; such, he adds, it remained for a space of seven happy months, at the end of which the news arrived of the alarming illness of the emperor.[1] Alas! he had discarded the simplicity of his earlier mode of living; he had abandoned himself to wine and lust and manifold excesses, and in that short space he had reached the brink of a premature grave. *When these sad news,* says Philo, *were spread among the nations,—for the season for sailing was about to close with the decline of autumn, and all who did not wish to winter abroad were hastening home from every quarter,—every enjoyment was at once cast aside, every city and house was clouded with sorrow and dejection, in proportion to its recent hilarity. All parts of the world sickened with Caius, and were worse sick than he, for his was the sickness of the body only, theirs of the soul. All men reflected on the evils of anarchy, its wars, plagues, and devastations, from which they foresaw no protection but in the emperor's recovery. But as soon as the disease began to abate, the rumour swiftly reached every corner of the empire, and universal were the*

[1] The security and outward prosperity of the empire under this principate may be further inferred from the curious comment of Orosius: "Servi rebelles et fugitivi gladiatores perterruere Romam, evertere Italiam, Siciliam delevere, jam pæne universo humano generi toto orbe metuendi. In diebus autem Salutis hoc est, temporibus Christianis, convellere quietem non potest vel Cæsar infestus." Oros. vii. 5.

excitement and anxiety to hear it from day to day confirmed. The safety of the prince was regarded by every land and island as identical with its own. Nor was a single country ever so interested before in the health of any one man, as the whole world then was in the preservation of the adorable Caius. So blind, concludes the sage, *is the mind of man to the matters that most nearly concern it, guessing and imagining this and that, but in fact knowing nothing.*[1]

Caius is corrupted by flattery.

This extravagant flattery, such as that against which the mature good sense of Pompeius had not been proof, easily turned the weak and giddy brain of Caius Cæsar. He began in his wild hallucinations to regard the life which had been saved by so many prayers as something sacred and divine, and to justify to himself any means that might seem conducive to its protection. He felt aggrieved by the nearness of the youthful cousin whom he had deprived of his inheritance, and quickly persuaded himself that his existence was a source of danger to the occupant of the throne.

He puts the young Tiberius to death.

It was enough to affirm that the wretched object of his jealousy had plotted against him: the citizens had no love nor interest but for the child of Germanicus, the giver of all good gifts to them; and when Caius caused him to be privately despatched, not venturing still, from a sense of shame perhaps rather than of distrust, to bring him to trial, they acquiesced in the murder as an act of wholesome expediency.[2] A centurion presented the poor lad with a sword, with the order to thrust it into his own bosom; but so untrained was he in the use of weapons, that he was obliged, it was said, to ask instruction how to use it effectually.[3]

[1] Philo. *leg. ad. Cai.* 4.

[2] Philo, *leg. ud. Cai.* 10. : ἀκοινώνητον ἀρχὴν θεσμὸς φύσεως ἀκίνητος . . . . οὗτος ἃ παθεῖν ἐμέλλησεν ἂν . . . . ἰσχυρότερος ὢν ἠμύνατο . . .

[3] Suet. *Calig.* 23.; Dion, lix. 9.; Philo, *l. c.*

Degraded manners of Caius.

The charm which blinded the Romans to the crimes and vices of their new ruler was simply the contrast he presented in his manners to the sullen recluse who had robbed them of their pleasures. Caius was endowed with no personal recommendations of figure or countenance. His features, if not altogether devoid of beauty were deformed by a harsh and scowling expression, and seem even in the rigid marble to writhe with muscular contortion. His head was bald; his complexion sallow and livid: his body was long, and his neck and legs slender: his gait was shambling, and his voice hoarse and dissonant.[1] But he was popular with the rabble, and the knights and senators, who had lately trembled before the sovereign, now cowered before the rabble; for he lived in the eyes of the people; all his actions were public; he sate through the day the observed of all observers in the circus; even his vices and sensual indulgences, gross and startling as they were, he made matters of parade and ostentation. The habits of Greece and Asia had suffered the rulers of the state to take part in the public contests of skill and agility, from which the pride of the Roman noble revolted: kings of Hellenic blood had not disdained to contend for prizes in the lists at Antioch or Seleucia; even the renegade Antonius had striven for mastery in the schools of Alexandria. With such examples before him, Caius, the first of the Roman emperors, did not forbear from singing and dancing in public, under

[1] Suetonius (*Calig.* 50.) and Seneca (*de const. Sap.* 18.) vie with one another in investing this prince with the most odious traits of deformity: "Statura fuit eminenti, colore expallido, corpore enormi, gracilitate maxima cervicis et crurum, oculis et temporibus concavis, fronte lata et torva, capillo raro ac circa verticem nullo, hirsutus cætera." "Tanta illi palloris insaniam testantis fœditas erat, tanta oculorum sub fronte anili latentium torvitas, tanta capitis destituti et emendicatis capillis aspersi, deformitas," &c. This is mere sign-painting. Medals and busts concur in giving us such a countenance as I have described in the text.

the tuition of a noted tragedian.[1] His passion for the sports of the circus led him to descend in person into the arena as a charioteer, and even it is said as a gladiator.[2] If the base multitude were delighted at seeing knights and senators driven to exhibit themselves for their amusement, much more were they charmed at the condescension of the emperor himself, in bearing a part, like the deities of old, in the sports and contests of his creatures. From this time, under imperial encouragement, charioteering began to take the place of a state institution. The rival parties or factions were known by their colours, —the Green, the Blue, the Red, and the White,— and the people enlisted themselves on the sides of their favourites with an ardour that menaced sometimes the peace of the city. The Green was the faction to which Caius attached himself: he frequented its stables, lived familiarly with its grooms and drivers, and gave all his confidence to some of its most noted performers. He endowed it with a separate place of exercise, a circus or stadium, in the fourteenth region of the city, to which the name of Caian continued long afterwards to be attached.[3]

The nobles might sigh over this odious degradation of the majesty of the Cæsars; yet it was better, they might think, that Caius should prostitute it

[1] Dion. lix. 5. 29.; Philo, *leg. ad Cai.* 30.

[2] Dion. lix. 5.: *προϊόντος δὲ δὴ τοῦ χρόνου καὶ ἐς ζήλωμα καὶ ἐς ἀγώνισμα πολλῶν προῆλθεν· ἅρματά τε γὰρ ἤλασε καὶ ἐμονομάχησεν. ὀρχήσει τε ἐχρήσατο, καὶ τραγῳδίαν ὑπεκρίνατο· καὶ ταῦτα μέν που ἀεὶ ἐποίει· ἅπαξ δέ ποτε τοὺς πρώτους τῆς γερουσίας σπουδῇ νυκτὸς, ὡς καὶ ἐπ' ἀναγκαῖόν τι βούλευμα μεταπεμψάμενος, ὠρχήσατο.*

[3] Dion, lix. 4.; Suet. *Calig.* 55.: "Prasinæ factioni addictus et deditus." On one occasion he presented a charioteer of the Green, named Eutychus, with a sum of 2,000,000 sesterces, or 16,000*l.* Suet. *l. c.*; Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xix. 3. It was, I suppose, in his enthusiasm for the art that he threatened, according to Suetonius (c. 55.), to make his horse Incitatus, or Galloper, a consul. Dion believes that he actually did make him a priest of his own divinity (lix. 28.).

in these trifling amusements, than guard it with the cruel jealousy of Tiberius. As long as the emperor and people were amused together, they hoped to enjoy in tranquillity their own voluptuous indolence; but they must have beheld with dismay the prodigality which in a few months had squandered all the savings of the late reign, and began to call for fresh contributions; nor could they have been unconcerned at the increasing bloodshed and ferocity which now distinguished the gladiatorial shows. The amphitheatre of Taurus was not spacious enough for the combatants who were launched into the arena. The Septa in the Campus Martius, and other capacious buildings, were seized for these cruel ceremonies. Not only did the emperor himself exhibit these spectacles; he required the prætors and ædiles, who since the disuse of popular election had been relieved from this service, to conform once more to the custom of the commonwealth. The restrictions imposed by Augustus on the number of the gladiators were utterly swept away. It was the delight of Caius to witness, not the dexterous fence of single pairs of swordsmen, but the promiscuous struggling of armed bands together. He was not content with the combats of slaves or criminals, or even of occasional volunteers from the ranks of Roman citizenship. He compelled the free and noble to expose themselves in these horrid contests on various pretences, and on one occasion presented as many as six-and-twenty knights together. The combats with wild beasts were carried on with the same prodigality of human blood. Once, when the number of criminals condemned to this service was not found sufficient, he suddenly commanded some of the spectators within the rails to be dragged into the arena, and opposed defenceless to the lions.[1]

Bloodiness of the gladiatorial shows.

[1] Dion, lix. 10.; Suet. *Calig.* 27. The story is not unlike some of the traits of cynical irony of which we read in Caius, and may

Caius was not slow, as might be expected, to profit by the lessons he was thus taking in the art of shedding blood. There was still another personage in Rome on whom he looked with no less jealousy than on the innocent Tiberius, the man to whom he owed his empire and possibly even his life. The disposition of the late emperor towards his nephew had been always doubtful. It was supposed by many that he detested his evil nature, and meditated his removal for the safety of one nearer to him. Macro, the tyrant's sole confidant, had boasted to Caius that he had saved him from destruction not less than three times. Whether this were true or not it was at least indiscreet to refer to it, and in hastening the end of Tiberius, and engaging the senate to accept his successor, Macro had laid obligations on Caius too great to be repaid. By this time the connexion between the prince and Ennia had become irksome to the licentious lover, as yet too shy to break his chains without blushing. He had promised to make her his empress, but he now hesitated to satisfy her claim. On the one hand, the husband ventured to give unpalatable counsels. He urged, it is said, high and generous views of the duties of empire, and rebuked, perhaps, the wanton levity which disgraced the purple of the Cæsars. On the other, the wife pressed the fulfilment of the engagement made to her, and lavished on her sated admirer caresses which now only disgusted him. Caius had released his friend Agrippa from confinement, and had conferred on him the sovereignty of a district in Palestine. But he did not immediately dismiss him to the enjoyment of it; his society was too agreeable, his coun-

Macro and Ennia are put to death.

not be beyond the bounds of credibility: the addition that he caused the tongues of these victims to be cut out, to prevent their outcries, seems a mere extravagant fiction. He was generally careful to keep on good terms with the populace.

sels too convenient, to be at once dispensed with.[1] The prince continued to imbibe lessons in kingcraft from the Eastern politician, and to emulate, under his experienced guidance, the behaviour of Asiatic autocrats; and we shall not perhaps err in ascribing to this influence the resolution he adopted of ridding himself first of his cousin, and soon afterwards of his unamiable mentor. The storm which was impending over Macro was soon made visible to the courtiers. Caius was observed to frown at his approach, and heard to mutter, *I am no longer a boy, but see, here is my tutor; here is the subject who fancies himself a ruler: I who was born a prince, nursed by emperors, cradled in the cabinet of state, must bow forsooth to an audacious upstart, a novice affecting the airs of a hierophant.*[2] The minister, as may be supposed, did not long survive the utterance of such sentiments by such a master. Macro received, as the last favour, permission to be his own executioner, and Ennia, the partner of his intrigues, and equally disappointed in their success, fell at the same time with him.[3]

M. Silanus commanded to put himself to death.

The destruction of the emperor's greatest benefactor was soon followed by the murder of a man of much higher distinction, and one whom from his station, experience, and intimate connexion with himself, he might have regarded as the most able and faithful of his friends. Caius had been united, as has been mentioned, in early youth to Claudia, the daughter of M. Junius Silanus, a personage whose ancient nobility might entitle him above almost any other citizen to the honour of an imperial alliance. The prince's father-in-law had been treated with the highest distinction both by Tiberius, with whom he had ingratiated himself by discreet but not servile flattery, and

[1] Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 7. 11. [2] Philo, *leg. ad Cai.* 8.
[3] Suet. *Calig.* 26. Dion, lix. 10.

afterwards by his successor. He had been appointed to the government of Africa; but latterly the jealousy of Caius had been excited against him, the death of his daughter had relaxed the bonds of affinity between them, and the advice he presumed to offer was ill-received and, perhaps, unskilfully tendered. The command of the legion and one-half the patronage of the province had been withdrawn from him, and placed in the hands of another officer, who was sent to watch him, and his innocently providing himself with an antidote to sea-sickness was represented, we are told, as a precaution against poison. Preparations were made, at the emperor's instance, for bringing him to trial for treasonable designs; but on the refusal of a noble orator to conduct the accusation, he was got rid of more summarily by an order to kill himself.[1]

Rapid s[illegible] of executions and confiscations.

The emperor's pecuniary necessities, in which his extravagance had already involved him, were perhaps the primary motive of this and other atrocities which quickly followed. The treasury was exhausted, and unpopular taxes had been remitted; but his passion for show and expenditure increased with indulgence, and the appetite of the people required to be pampered with novelty and variety. The fatal facility of murder, without even the intervention of any judicial process, offered a dire temptation to power unchecked by principle or pity. Delation, ever ready at his back, was too dear an instrument for the prodigal to use. Informers and orators required a portion of the victim's fortune, and their most zealous efforts might

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 23.; Dion, lix. 8.; and more particularly Philo, *legat. ad Cai.* 9. I cannot but regard this story as suspicious. It was a strong act of policy, and, in the disturbed state of the African frontier, not an unreasonable one, to weaken the arm of the senatorial proconsul by placing an imperial legatus by his side. Such an encroachment, however, on the independence of the senate might naturally be resented, and an invidious fiction be grafted on it.

sometimes fail of success; but a simple order to the accused to despatch himself was attended with no expense, and it was, moreover, sure to be effectual. This was the process by which the emperor's blows were made generally to fall on men whose sole crime was their riches; but if any pretext was wanted, the papers, real or pretended, of Tiberius, the same which he had recently professed to destroy unopened, sufficed to furnish matter of accusation. The two crimes most commonly alleged, as most odious to the nobility on the one hand, and to the populace on the other, were complicity in the bloody artifices of Sejanus, and hostility to the house of Germanicus.[1]

Despair of Caius on the death of his sister Drusilla. A. U. 791.

While the feelings of the profligate were thus becoming hardened in cruelty, they were suddenly embittered by a domestic loss, which, spoilt and pampered as he was, seems to have shattered his reason. The three sisters of Caius have already been mentioned. The scandalous rumours of the day insinuated that he had indulged an incestuous passion for all of them in turn, a horror almost unknown among all the horrors of Roman vice, and which only once before had been ascribed by party malice to a profligate of an earlier age. The public honours he had obtained for them, and certain marks of favour he was said to bestow on them in private, hardly suffice to establish the credit of this charge as regards at least two of the sisters; but the commerce of Caius with Drusilla is too circumstantially attested to be reasonably rejected. He had been rebuked, it is said, for this intrigue by Antonia while yet a stripling. Tiberius united Drusilla to Cassius Longinus; but Caius, when he attained to power, separated her from her husband, and after living for some time openly with her, gave her to an unworthy favourite, M. Lepidus, who seems to have resigned her to him

[1] Dion, lix. 4, 6, 10., lx. 4.

again without scruple. His passion for this poor creature knew no limits. In his illness, if we may believe our accounts, he had actually named her heiress of the empire and of his official dignities.[1] But he recovered, while she shortly afterwards fell sick and died. Caius was plunged in a frenzy of despair. He commanded that she should be honoured with a public funeral of extraordinary magnificence, that all business should cease, and even the commonest affairs of domestic life be suspended on pain of death.[2] For himself, he rushed from the city to the solitude of his Alban villa, declared that he was incapable of appearing in the distressing pageant, and abandoned himself instead to the most trifling amusements.[3] Once again he burst from his retreat, and with his beard and hair untrimmed, hastened down the Italian coast till he reached Sicily, where he diverted himself with the ordering of some public games at Syracuse. When this humour was satisfied, he returned not less abruptly to Rome, to close the season of mourning and appoint divine honours for the deceased. The senate acquiesced without hesitation. Not only did it decree her the honours of the blessed Livia, but added that her gilded statue should be placed in the curia, and another in the temple of Venus, to which the same adoration should be paid as to the daughter of Jupiter, She was to bear in heaven the title of Panthea, the Universal Divinity; a temple was to be erected to her; men and women were enjoined to provide themselves with her consecrated images for their private devo-

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 24.: "Heredem quoque honorum atque imperii æger instituit."

[2] Suet. *l. c.*: "Justitium indixit; in quo risisse, lavisse, cœnasse, cum parentibus aut conjuge liberisve, capital fuit." Comp. Dion, lix. 11.

[3] Seneca, *Cons. ad Polyb.* 36.: "Conspectum civium suorum profugit . . . justa non præstitit, sed in Albano suo tesseris ac foro, provocatis hujusmodi aliis occupationibus, acerbissimi furoris levabat mala."

tions; women were to swear henceforth by no other name. The worship of Drusilla or Panthea was imposed as a duty upon all the cities of Italy and the provinces. A senator, Livius Geminus, swore that he had with his own eyes beheld her ascend into heaven, and he confirmed the assertion by steadfastly imprecating curses on himself and his, if he spake not the truth. The perjury was rewarded on earth by the gift of a million of sesterces. Having strained his morbid feelings to this pitch of fanaticism, the crazy monster relieved them by an outburst of cynical humour. He declared that if any man dared to mourn for his sister's death he should be punished, for she had become a goddess; if any one ventured to rejoice at her deification, he should be punished also, for she was dead.[1]

Caius marries, and shortly repudiates, Lollia Paulina.

So far was Caius constant to this fantastic passion that he never afterwards swore, it is said, by any other name than Drusilla's. His unbridled fancy had before impelled him to snatch himself a wife from the arms of her husband, after the manner, as he himself pompously proclaimed, of Romulus and Augustus; and this victim being repudiated a few days only after the deification of Drusilla, he repeated the same feat with another.[2] The first of these wives was Orestilla, the consort of Cn. Piso, the son of the enemy of Germanicus; the other was Lollia Paulina, the most celebrated beauty of her days, who was united to a distinguished noble, Memmius Regulus, the consul who had arrested Sejanus.[3] But Caius

[1] Suetonius, Dion, *ll. cc.* Seneca, however, by whom the story was probably suggested, gives it no such extravagant turn: "Eodem tempore quo templa illi constituebat ac pulvinaria, eos qui parum mœsti fuerant crudeli afficiebat animadversione."

[2] Suet. *Calig.* 25. On the occasion of his marriage with Orestilla, the wife of C. Piso: "Matrimonium sibi repertum exemplo Romuli et Augusti." The first had thus carried off Hersilia (Plut. *Rom.* 14.), the last Livia.

[3] Dion, lix. 12.

was not smitten, perhaps, so much by the charms of her person as of her estate, for she was the richest woman in Rome, the heiress of the extortioner of Gaul; and the emperor, like a mere private spendthrift, was driven to restore his shattered fortunes by a judicious alliance. Lollia displayed her magnificence with a pomp truly imperial. *I have seen her,* says Pliny, *on no occasion of special solemnity, but at a plain citizen's bridal supper, all covered with pearls and emeralds—her hair and headdress, ears, neck, and fingers—worth as much as forty millions of sesterces. Such was the style in which she came to witness the act of marriage. Nor were these the love-tokens of a princely prodigal; they were the treasures of her grandsire, amassed from the spoils of provinces. Such was the end of all this rapine. Lollius suffered disgrace and perished by his own hand, that his grand-daughter forsooth might blaze by lamp-light in the splendour of forty millions.*[1] But once united to the rapacious emperor, she was not suffered long to parade this brilliancy. She too was repudiated in her turn by the inconstant prince, and we can hardly suppose that she was suffered a second time to carry off her jewels with her.[2] Nevertheless, we shall find her recommended again for her riches as the bride of another emperor; nor does Pliny, in noting the splendour of her fortune, remark how suddenly she was deprived of it.

Herod Agrippa quits Rome for his sovereignty in the East.

In the second year of his principate Caius performed an imposing ceremony, the distribution of crowns and sceptres to various foreign applicants. The solemnity was not the less interesting from the respect he paid to the forms of the republic. A silken curtain, then

[1] Plin. *Hist. Nat.* ix. 58.

[2] Suet. *Calig.* 25.: "Brevique missam fecit interdicto cujusquam in perpetuum coitu." This prohibition means, perhaps, that she was forbidden to contract another marriage, in order that the emperor might not be required to restore her portion.

most rare and precious, was drawn across a lofty stage in the forum; and the emperor was discovered seated between the consuls. He recited the decree of the senate, which conferred the throne of Ituræa upon Soemus, of the Lesser Armenia upon Cotys, of Thrace upon Rhæmetalces, and of Pontus upon Polemo.[1] At the same time Agrippa, who recently, on the death of Philip, had been gratified with his tetrarchy, to which the districts of Abilene and Cœle-Syria had been added, was allowed, after long delay, to repair to his new dominions.[2] As the first pledge of his amity, the emperor had already presented him, on his release from custody, with a chain of gold of equal weight with the iron fetters which had bound him to his warder. This present was no more than a token perhaps of the riches which were at the same time heaped upon him, which enabled him to exhibit his accustomed magnificence in Rome during the period that Caius still chose to retain him about his own person. But these shining marks of favour, and the consciousness of his personal influence, did not fail to inspire him with more ambitious views. He aimed at recombining under his sceptre the broken fragments of the great sovereignty of Herod, one portion of which was now under the immediate government of Roman officials, another still occupied by his kinsman Antipas and his sister Herodias. He employed perhaps the period of his prolonged sojourn in Rome in imbuing his patron's mind with distrust of the rulers of Samaria; and the mutual recriminations of the Jewish princes, which the government forbade to issue in an appeal to arms, could only be controlled eventually by the direct decision of the emperor.

It was in the fall apparently of the year 791 that

[1] Dion. lix. 12.

[2] Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 7. 11. Agrippa was relieved from his attendance on his patron in the second year of the Caian principate, on promising to return whenever his presence was required.

Agrippa sailed for the East. The speediest and surest voyage from Rome to Palestine lay not by way of Brundisium and the Hadrian and Carpathian seas, but by the longer route of Puteoli and Alexandria, on account of its favourable winds, and the superiority of the vessels which ran between those important havens. It was to Alexandria, therefore, on the recommendation of the emperor himself, that Agrippa in the first instance repaired. His presence there gave rise to scenes of disorder, which were not without their influence on the future fortunes of the Jewish people, and must not be passed over in silence.

Agrippa arrives at Alexandria on his way to Palestine.

No one yet perhaps could augur that the Jewish people, the citizens of a narrow and obscure corner of the empire, would one day divide the interest of mankind with Rome itself, in a great and mortal struggle. Yet no other city but Jerusalem might seem at this period to rival the capital of the Cæsars, as the centre of a compact and at the same time a wide-spread nationality, and the beloved metropolis of innumerable colonies planted in every land. No other city was so bound to the hearts of its children throughout the world by its customs and traditions, its faith and its aspirations. No other possessed within its bosom the germs of universal conquest: it yet remained to be seen whether circumstances would suffer the material extension of its power over alien nations, or whether its authority should eventually be confined to a moral and spiritual pre-eminence. But as the presence of the Roman was felt on every foreign shore as that of a material organizer and controller, so the Jews appear in some mysterious way to have rebuked, by the force of their character, wherever they established themselves, the feeble decrepitude of the races around them. The disintegration of ancient nationalities was nowhere more manifest than in the teem-

The Jews at Alexandria insulted by the natives.

ing city of Alexandria, where the Greek and Copt mingled in ill-cemented union, and were bound most strictly together by their common hatred of the Jews residing among them. The number of this foreign race in Egypt has already been stated at a million; of the five sections of the great emporium of the East two were principally inhabited by Jews, and they were found scattered in considerable force throughout the others. But if the proportion of this element to the indigenous population was so large, its habits were less gregarious, its temper less excitable: it was devoted to the quiet pursuit of commerce or letters; it had no wish for the exercise of arms, nor was it entrusted with them. The native Alexandrians, however, regarded these Jewish denizens as aliens to be hated and despised: lively and turbulent themselves, they were ever ready to break out in violence against their graver neighbours, and it required all the vigilance and impartial austerity of the Roman rule to protect the one from the bitter animosity of the other. The arrival of Agrippa seems to have been the signal for an outburst of this national jealousy. It was the humour of the Alexandrians to mock and injure the Jews on all occasions: they now chose to make the new king of the Jews a special object of derision, and for this purpose taking an idiot of the name of Carabas, well known in their streets, they crowned him with a diadem of papyrus leaves, put a reed in his hand, and bore him in mock triumph through the city, attended by a body-guard of children armed with sticks.[1] On reaching the quarters of their foes they redoubled their shouts and acclamations, saluting him with the titles of Lord and King. Instead of checking this outrage, by which the Jews were naturally exasperated, the Roman governor, Avilius Flaccus, seems to have encouraged and applauded it. This man, after serving

[1] Philo, *in Flaccum*, 6.

Tiberius discreetly in the command of Egypt for the space of five years, had fallen out of favour with the new emperor, and was seeking, as the Jewish party imagined, to recover it. The cherished enmity of the Jewish political leaders to Rome, and the uneasy jealousy of the state towards them, was well known to the men who bore rule in these parts; the Roman officials had themselves too often provoked them purposely by injustice, in order to make their exasperation a pretext for harsher measures of repression. Such perhaps was the object which Flaccus now had in view; such at least it appeared to the sufferers themselves, one of whom, the most distinguished name in their secular literature, has denounced it with no little eloquence and feeling. Tiberius had forbidden the worship of his pretended divinity in Rome: even in the provinces he had restrained and discouraged it. He knew that it was absurd; and nothing absurd in politics, he shrewdly determined, could continue to be always safe. But the crude inexperience of his youthful successor was troubled by no such scruples. The governors of the provinces were induced to believe that they could in no way pay court to him more palatably, than by impelling their subjects to the adoration of the Cæsar. The excessive repugnance of the Jews to admit any representations of the human form into their places of religious meeting incited Flaccus to adopt this means of humiliating them, and he instigated their fellow-citizens in Alexandria to demand that statues of the emperor should be erected in their synagogues. Tumults and bloodshed quickly followed. The Alexandrians, as the strongest party, drove the Jews into a single quarter of the city, plundering and burning their residences throughout the rest, and subjecting many of them to death and tortures. But the prefect, who had acted thus shamefully, found that in

Statues of the emperor intruded into the Jewish synagogues.

Disturbances at Alexandria.

his zeal he had fatally overreached himself. The government at Rome, always sensitive about the condition of Egypt, was seriously alarmed and offended. He was summoned home to answer for the peril into which he had brought the storehouse of Italy, and sent thither in chains by his successor Bassus.[1]

Flaccus, the Roman governor, disgraced.

Agrippa hastily quitted the scene into which his presence had introduced so terrible a disturbance, and prosecuted his voyage to Palestine. His arrival in his new principality excited the alarm and jealousy of the rulers of Samaria, on whose compassion he had so lately lived. Antipas was wary and circumspect, slow, perhaps, to feel, and still slower to move; Herodias, more quick and prompt, if not really more ambitious, than her husband, urged him with all her influence to repair to Rome, and sue for the province of Judea, or at least for such a confirmation of his actual sovereignty as might secure it against the intrigues of their artful neighbour.[2] It was long before she could prevail on him to risk the voyage to Italy, whence so many occupants of Eastern thrones had never returned. At last they sailed together for Baiæ, where Caius was then sojourning, closely followed by Agrippa, with charges against them of complicity with a new revolution in Parthia, and of preparing to hold Samaria against the Romans with seventy thousand stand of arms they had there collected. The result of the interviews which the rivals had successively with the emperor was that Antipas was deprived of his sovereignty, and relegated, first to Lugdunum, and afterwards to the distant province of Spain.[3] Herodias, as the daughter of Antonia's

Banishment of Herod Antipas and Herodias. A. D. 39. A. U. 792.

[1] Philo, *in Flacc.* 6—13.: *τοῦτο καινότατον ὑπέμεινε Φλάκκος ἐν χώρᾳ ἧς ἀφηγεῖτο, πολεμίου τρόπον ζωγρηθείς.* Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 9. 1.

[2] Salvador (i. 454.) reminds us how Antipas is characterized as a *fox* in the Gospels. St. Luke xiii. 32.

[3] Joseph. *Antiq.* xviii. 8. 2.

friend Berenice, was indulged with an offer of pardon, together with some portion of her estates; but this, with the high spirit of a Jewish matron, she firmly rejected, and insisted on sharing her husband's disgrace. The fortunate Agrippa was now gratified with the addition of Samaria to his dominions. The province of Judea alone remained to reunite the sovereignty of Herod.

Agrippa receives Samaria, in addition to his tetrarchy of Galilee.

Caius claims divine worship.

Caius had now played the autocrat without restraint or remonstrance for more than two years, and his pride had been inflated to the highest pitch. The foreign princes, whom he had assembled about his throne and admitted to his table, had pampered him with fulsome adulation. They had vied with one another in doing homage to him as the dispenser of crowns; they had suffered him to regard and treat them as his vassals, and acknowledged themselves as merely ministers of his paramount authority. When they contended among themselves for precedence, he cut short the dispute with the maxim of Homer, *One chief, one king.* It is mentioned, as the height of his daring insolence, that he *all but* assumed the diadem, and converted the shadow of the principate into the reality of a royal rule.[1] But the Eastern King was always near allied to Divinity. This was a political dogma which the Macedonians had found established in Asia, and they had willingly availed themselves of it. Regarding the Godhead as a Spirit of Joy and Bounty only, without the sterner attributes and moral excellences attached to him by the Western and Northern world, the Oriental, and the Greek especially, was prone to discover an emanation of Divinity in every human dispenser of worldly blessings. *Giver of good things, Giver of prosperity,* was the title with which he was

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 22.: "Exclamavit, εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω εἷς βασιλεύς: Nec multum abfuit quin statim diadema sumeret, speciemque principatus in regni formam converteret."

content to address the Judge and Supreme Ruler of the Universe[1]: it was easy to divert his adoration from the supreme to the lesser givers, his own chiefs and kings, who were nearer to him, and whose bounty he could more sensibly appreciate. If they were not almighty, even the Gods above were subject one to another, and all to Fate[2]: if they were vicious and impure, the Gods too had their pleasant vices: their follies and even their crimes were little regarded as long as these imperfections did not touch the mass of their worshippers. It was long before the higher moral sense of the Romans could yield assent to this degrading view of the Deity; but when the populace grew thoroughly corrupt, and imbued in a great degree with Oriental phantasies, the upper class, with no belief of its own, was willing that they should amuse and deceive themselves by any belief however preposterous. The divine honours paid to so many of his race, and the regular form which the Cæsar-worship was assuming amidst the ruins of ancient rituals, made a lively impression on the imagination of the excitable Caius. When eleven cities of Asia contended before the senate for the honour of devoting themselves to the worship of Tiberius, the claims of Miletus and Ephesus had been rejected because they were too deeply engaged in the service of Apollo and Diana.[3] The cult of the emperor, they were given to understand, ought, wherever it was established, to precede every local religion; or rather his worshippers ought to divide their vows and sacrifices with no other patron. The principle thus gravely asserted Caius carried out without compunction. He aspired not only to be recognised as a God, but claimed the same pre-eminence among the Gods as

[1] Callimachus, *in Jov.* 91.: δῶτορ ἐάων, δῶτορ ἀπημοσύνης.

[2] Stat. *Sylv.* iii. 3. 52.:

"Mox crescit in illos
Imperium Superis; sed habent et Numina legem."

[3] Tac. *Ann.* iv. 55.

he enjoyed without a rival among human potentates. His assumption of the name and attributes sometimes of Hercules, sometimes of Bacchus, sometimes of Apollo, was the whim of his monstrous imagination; but when he announced that he was the Latian Jupiter himself, still more when he pretended to converse as an equal or superior with Jupiter, and challenged him with an Homeric verse to combat, he asserted that the worship of the Cæsar was paramount throughout the world to every other formula of religious devotion.[1]

This claim admitted generally with indifference,

This assumption of divinity, in which even the Romans acquiesced, met, we may suppose, with no resistance, and was admitted almost without remark in the provinces generally. The Athenians might sigh to see the heads of some of their noblest images struck off, and the trunks carried to Rome to be united to the features of a barbarian emperor; but it was the insult to art, taste, and feeling, not to their languid religious principles, which they chiefly resented.[2] But with the Jews, both at home and abroad, it was far otherwise. Where, indeed, their numbers were few, and their sense of nationality weakened by distance or dispersion, the order to set up the emperor's statue in their synagogues might excite no direct resistance;

but resented with indignation by the Jews.

but wherever numbers and union, as well as obstinate prejudices, gave them strength, they sternly refused to admit the accursed thing within their walls, and defied the powers of earth to intrude it on them. At Alexandria the contest had issued in riot and bloodshed. The Jews

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 22.: "Cum Capitolino Jove secreto fabulabatur, modo insusurrans, ac præbens invicem aurem, modo clarius nec sine jurgiis. Nam comminantis audita est: *ἤ μ' ἀνάειρ', ἢ ἐγὼ σέ.*" *Il* xxiii. 724. Comp. Dion, lix. 28., and a story in Seneca, *de Ira*, i. ult.

[2] Suet. *l. c.* We must remember the infatuated worship they had themselves paid to Antonius in the guise of Bacchus more than seventy years before.

were overpowered for the time. We have seen indeed that the indiscretion with which the prefect had encouraged their assailants had been followed by his disgrace; but this had been merely a popular persecution, and the resistance of the Jews to it might be excused, and its abettor punished. When, however, the decree of the senate should be launched, with the sanctions of law and power, for the establishment of the emperor's worship in the synagogue, opposition to it would be regarded with far other eyes, the fury of the multitude would be backed by all the force of Rome, and the hands of the prefect strengthened for a complete and final victory. When Bassus arrived to take the place of Flaccus, he bore, perhaps, in his hands the instrument of this spiritual tyranny. The triumph of the Jewish party was but short-lived. Not only in Alexandria but, as they were informed, in Judea and throughout the world, the decree for the worship of the idol of stone would be speedily enforced without remorse. Possibly there was still a moment of suspense before the bolt fell. The Alexandrian Jews sought to avert it by a direct appeal to the sense or mercy of the emperor. Among many learned and eloquent men who adorned their persuasion, was at that time one of peculiar eminence, whose profound erudition and skill in moulding the belief of his country to the philosophy of the Greeks have given him a high place in the ranks of classical literature. Philo the Jew, as he was specially designated to distinguish him from the many scholars who once bore the same name but have long passed into oblivion, was now sent with four others as a deputation from his countrymen in Egypt, to lay before Caius the grievances under which they suffered, to explain the nature of their religious scruples, and to avert if possible the wrath of the self-styled Divinity by protestations of loyalty and true devotion.

Mission of Philo the Jew.

The account of this embassy, which the illustrious envoy has himself left us, is one of the most curious monuments of antiquity. No other fragment of ancient history, excepting perhaps the fourth of Juvenal's Satires, gives us so near an insight into the actual domestic life of the rulers of the world; and though the style of Philo is laborious and turgid, and the character of his mind, ever exercised in weaving plausible unrealities, such as to engage little confidence in his judgment or even in his statements of fact, nevertheless we cannot rise from its perusal without feeling that we have made a personal acquaintance, to use the words of another sophist, with *the kind of beast called a tyrant.*[1] As Antipas and Agrippa had contended which should outstrip the other in first reaching the prince's antechamber, so the Alexandrians sent now their deputation as well as the Jews, and both the one and the other landed almost at the same moment on the coast of Campania. The Jews were much dismayed at hearing on their arrival that Petronius, the governor of Judea, had been commanded to erect a colossal figure of the Cæsar in the temple of Jerusalem, even in the Holy of Holies[2]; and that the consummation of this crowning impiety, retarded for a moment by that officer's hesitation at the prayers, the murmurs, and the menaces of the true believers, was urged more imperatively than before by a fresh injunction from Rome, and now only awaited the completion of the abominable image by the hands of Phœnician artificers. At this moment the tyrant was flitting from one of his villas to another, followed by trains

Interview of the Jewish envoys with Caius.

[1] The saying of Apollonius of Tyana, twenty years later, as recorded by Philostratus, iv. 37.: *τὸ δὲ θήριον τοῦτο ὃ καλοῦσιν οἱ πολλοὶ τύραννον, οὔτε ὁπόσαι αἱ κεφαλαὶ αὐτῷ οἶδα, οὔτε εἰ γαμψώνυχόν τε καὶ καρχαροδοῦν ἐστιν.*

[2] Philo, *legat. ad Caium*, 26.: *οἴχεται ἡμῶν τὸ ἱερόν· ἀνδριάντα κολοσσιαῖον, εἰσωτάτω τῶν ἀδύτων ἀνατεθῆναι ὁ Γάϊος προσέταξε Διὸς ἐπίκλησιν αὐτοῦ.*

of courtiers and petitioners, and among them the rival envoys of Egypt, long unable to obtain an audience. At last he summoned these last to an interview together in the gardens of Mæcenas, which he had connected with the ample pleasure grounds of the Lamias, and where he was engaged in planning extensions and alterations, to adapt the proudest seats of the nobility to the proportions of a royal residence. *This was the spot*, says Philo, *chosen whereon to enact the catastrophe of the great drama of Jewish nationality.*[1] *Here*, he continues, *we found the tyrant, surrounded by stewards, architects, and workmen,—every hall and chamber thrown open for his inspection,—ranging from room to room. Called into his presence, we advanced reverently and discreetly, saluting him by the title of Augustus and Imperator.* Halting for a moment in his eccentric course, he suddenly addressed them. *What*, said he, *are you the God-haters, the men who deny my divinity, confessed by all the world besides?*[2] and he raised his hand towards heaven with a frightful execration. The Alexandrians pressed forward in their turn with odious adulation. *Lord and master*, said their spokesman Isidorus, *still more, and more justly, will you hate them, when you learn that of all mankind these Jews alone have refused to sacrifice for your safety. . . . Lord Caius, Lord Caius*, exclaimed the Jews, *we are slandered.*[3] *We have sacrificed for you, we have offered hecatombs, we have not feasted on the flesh of our victims, but have made holocausts of them, not once but thrice already; first when you assumed the empire, again when you were restored from your dire disease, once more for the success of your expedition against the Germans. . . . Be it so*, replied he, *ye sacri-*

[1] Philo, *leg. ad Cai.* 44.: κεῖθι γὰρ ἐπὶ παροῦσιν ἡμῖν ἡ κατὰ πάντος τοῦ ἔθνους ἔμελλε σκηνοβατεῖσθαι δραματοποιΐα.

[2] Philo, *l. c.*: ὑμεῖς ἐστὲ οἱ θεομισεῖς, οἱ θεὸν μὴ νομίζοντες εἶναί με, τὸν ἤδη παρὰ πᾶσιν τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀνωμολογημένον.

[3] Philo, c. 45.: κύριε Γάϊε, συκοφαντούμεθα.

ficed for me, but not to me. The unfortunate Jews were struck dumb with *abysmal terror.*[1] For a moment they were relieved by the emperor suddenly rushing off to some distant apartments, some upstairs, some below, examining their proportions and decorations, approving here, ordering changes and reconstructions elsewhere. The envoys were hurried in his train, backwards and forwards, the Alexandrians pressing on with them, and ever jeering and mocking them, *as in a play.* But at the next pause in his career, Caius turned round abruptly with the question, *Pray, gentlemen, why do not you eat pork?* Whereat the Alexandrians in their glee so far forgot themselves as to burst into loud uncourtly merriment, which brought on them frowns and shrugs from some of the emperor's attendants. The moment was favourable to the Jewish envoys, and they answered discreetly, *Every people has its special customs; our opponents are not without their own peculiarities. . . . Some nations,* one of them meekly suggested, *refrain from eating the flesh of young lambs. . . . Quite right too,* screamed the emperor, *their meat is bad.* Pleased with his joke, which took the Jews by surprise, he went on more mildly to inquire into the national usages of their countrymen: but when they began to address him in a set speech, explaining and justifying the principles of their polity, he soon cut them short, afraid, as Philo surmised, to listen to a justification which he should be unable to refute, and rushed back to his architectural fancies. Among the wonders before them, the envoys, terrified as they were, could not help remarking the windows of one chamber filled with a transparent stone, admitting the light but warding off the wind, and tempering the burning rays of the sun. Once more the emperor came up to them, and desired them, with less asperity than at

[1] Philo, c. 45.: φρίκη βύθιος.

first, to resume their explanations; but again he interrupted them after a few words by running off to superintend the arrangement of some pictures. The Jews continued still to follow him, more dead than alive from fear, putting in from time to time a few words of solicitation or apology, but addressing themselves all the while in silent prayer to the great God of their fathers. *He had mercy*, says Philo, *upon us, and turned at last the emperor's heart to pity. . . . Men who think me no god*, exclaimed Caius, *are more unfortunate, after all, than criminal;* and with this remark he left the place and dismissed them. Though his last words were not ungracious, the Jews perceived that they had failed in the object of their mission, and returned home with heavy hearts, with no hope in the compassion or justice of man. They betook themselves to their God, and they found deliverance. The resolution indeed of the tyrant was in no wise shaken: the instances even of Agrippa, whom the Jews engaged to plead their cause, and to enforce moral with political arguments, were totally unavailing.[1] The orders to Petronius were repeated with increasing stringency, and every plea and pretext for delay disregarded. The Jews, stung to madness, were preparing to defend their holy place at the price of their national existence, when in a moment a blow, that might seem heaven-directed, struck down the monster, and paralysed the sacrilege. But the crimes of this semi-Oriental divinity have yet to be described more particularly, before we can rejoice, as it deserves, in the just retribution of his downfall.

[1] Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 9. 8. According to this writer Caius at one moment yielded to Agrippa, and rescinded his orders to Petronius; but on hearing of the resistance the Jews were prepared to make, repeated them more vehemently than ever. The last missive, however, did not reach Petronius till after the news had arrived of the tyrant's death. Comp. Tac. *Hist.* v. 9.: "Jussi a Caio Cæsare effigiem ejus in templo locare, arma potius sumpserunt: quem motum Cæsaris mors diremit."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Reflections on the deficiency of our materials for the history of Caius.—Defects of his education and training.—His contempt for political disguises.—The priesthood of the Arician Diana.—Colossal character of his conceptions: his architectural extravagances.—The viaduct over the Velabrum.—The bridge of boats at Baiæ.—His extravagant luxury.—He pretends to eloquence.—His spite against great reputations, and belief in his own divinity.—Systematic persecution of the wealthy nobles.—Massacre of exiles.—The people alienated by taxation.—His expedition into Gaul.—Overthrow of Lentulus Gætulicus and Lepidus.—Pretended invasion of Britain.—Returning to Rome, he plays the tyrant without disguise.—Conspiracies against him.—He is slain by Cassius Chærea. (A. D. 39—41, A. U. 792—794.)

The principate of Caius a gap in the Annals of Tacitus.

The loss of several books of the Annals of Tacitus leaves us dependent for our knowledge of the domestic events of the third principate on the meagre pages of Dion and Seutonius. Of that immortal work, every gap in which may be equally deplored as a loss to history and to philosophy, four books, from the seventh to the tenth, contained the affairs of less than ten years; a larger space proportionally than the writer had allowed to the details of the Tiberian administration; from whence we may conclude that the later period was even more prolific than the earlier in important and interesting events. If two or even three of these books were appropriated, as we may suppose, to the reign of Caius, many circumstances must undoubtedly have been deemed worthy of more particular consideration than we find in the dry statements of Dion, and the desultory anecdotes of the Roman biographer, and must have occupied, in the thoughtful view of a wiser writer, no unimportant place in the general history of his countrymen. We may presume that in

them the affairs of the Roman administration in the East (of which we now derive our information from Jewish sources only) were treated with the fulness of detail and wealth of language which became the pen of the most eloquent of historians, and with all that deep interest in the subject which must have been felt by one who had lived to witness the struggle and awful catastrophe in which they had resulted. From them we should have learnt, perhaps, the real nature of the complaints of the Alexandrians against the Jews, and have been admitted, at least, to a familiar acquaintance with the condition of the Egyptian capital, with its mixed population of surly Copts, subtle and garrulous Greeks, reserved and busy Hebrews. We should have traced, in a few burning touches never to be obliterated, the fierce unyielding character of that marvellous people, to whom, as the surest of human depositaries, were committed the oracles of God. We should have received more particular details of the false and offensive statements regarding the origin of the intruders from Palestine, which circulated among their enemies, and which, as we discover from the allusion of Tacitus himself at a later period, were accepted by the Romans with the prone credulity of national exasperation.[1]

How Tacitus would have painted the emperor Caius.

But more especially we might expect to have found in these lost books a judicious and temperate survey of the state of public feeling at Rome, and a comparative view of the genius of the nation as it appeared under the first and under the third princeps; with an estimate of the manifest decline of national sentiments, and decay of ancient ideas, which could render possible the existence of a tyranny Oriental in its features, a reign of abject terror and self-abasement in the centre of the Western capital, in the midst of every outward appliance of luxury and festive enjoyment. We should

[1] Tacitus, *Hist.* v. 2—5.

have seen perhaps portrayed in glowing characters the circumstance which marked the great distinction between the despotism of a Tiberius and a Caius: that the one blighted with its chill shadow the germs of national enjoyment; while the other, though far more wanton and ferocious, surrounded itself with all the most alluring forms of gaiety and voluptuousness. Above all, we should have admired the dark picture of the terrible emperor himself, drawn as Tacitus only could have drawn him, as a deified Tarquin or a crowned and sceptred Catilina. In a few striking lines he has already described him to us, such as he was in early youth, a degraded and servile dissembler, drowning all sense of honour and affection in obscene sensuality, making himself unworthy of life for mere life's sake:[1] in another place a single expression escaping from his pen, implies his belief in the monster's insanity;[2] and this no doubt is the view of his character which the complete account of his career, had it descended to us, would have brought out in full and startling relief.

Possibly some injustice has been done to the character of Caius.

The most cursory examination, indeed, of our existing authorities will show that, while they seem to vie in reciting the worst atrocities of the Caian principate, there is much in which their accounts contradict each other, and much about which a thoughtful reader is constrained to suspend his credence. Critics, accordingly, have not been wanting who, rejecting as confused and incredible the bulk of this hostile testi-

[1] Tac. *Ann.* vi. 20.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 3.: "Caii turbata mens." Again, but not quite in the same sense (*Hist.* iv. 48.), "Turbidus animi." Seneca, in a passage quoted above, speaks of his *insania* as sufficiently manifest. So again (*Cons. ad Polyb.* 36.), "Furiosa inconstantia." Statius, *Sylv.* iii. 3. 70. "furiis agitatus." Suetonius assures us that he was himself sensible of his infirmity, and proposed to take a course of hellebore in retirement. *Calig.* 50. His distraction of mind, his habitual fever and sleeplessness, as described by this writer, are strongly indicative of intermittent insanity.

mony, have suggested that Caius was in truth the victim of the capital and the nobility, a protector of the provinces and the populace, whose character was blackened with desperate malice by the animosity of partisans. Even the adverse testimony of Tacitus, they would urge, might have served, as in the case of Tiberius, to discredit some statements of his colleagues, and thus to mitigate our idea of the crimes of the object of their common hostility. It is possible we might read in the character of Caius, thus sifted by cross-examination of the adverse witnesses, an anxiety to avoid the errors of his predecessor; and that as Tiberius secluded himself from his people, and fell into the hands of an unworthy favourite, his successor may have resolved to know everything and do everything himself, to rely on no minister or adviser, but rushing unceasingly from Rome to Italy, from Italy to the provinces, to inform himself of every detail of his world-wide administration: a task to which no man was equal, least of all a sickly youth of imperfect education and unbalanced intellect,—a task which had overstrained the energy of a Julius, the sagacity of an Augustus, and the prudent industry of a Tiberius. That there was a period at the commencement of his brief principate during which there was at least a struggle between beneficent wishes and selfish inclinations, when his liberal and patriotic declarations were not consciously insincere, nor his deference to the people and senate assumed at the mere dictate of fear, cannot fairly be disputed. His activity was certainly remarkable; many of his plans of public improvement were as wise as they were bold; the vigilance of his government never relaxed; though well aware of the perils of his position, he was harassed by no craven timidity; we hear of no complaints under him of affairs neglected and foes encouraged: yet he yielded himself to no minister or favourite; he did his own work with a vehement

impetuosity, no less conspicuous in the toils of administration than in the excesses of debauchery. Nevertheless, the verdict of antiquity has gone against him. The question with our imperfect lights will not bear to be reopened; and we have no other course but to join in the general condemnation pronounced upon the miserable stripling, of whom the best that can be said is that the wildness of a brain, stricken in the cradle with hereditary insanity, was aggravated by the horrors of his unnatural position. Accepting the common impression of his character as on the whole sufficiently established, I shall be satisfied with pointing out, in one or two remarkable instances, the apparent misrepresentation of conduct really wise and laudable.

The men, it must be observed, who had preceded Caius in empire had all been trained to rule by long exercise, and had tested their powers in the best of schools, in manly obedience to the circumstances which controlled them. Caius alone had inherited his autocracy without undergoing this discipline, for the mere abject servility of his submission to his uncle does not deserve the name of a moral and reasonable training. It was only for a short time that he had enjoyed any expectation of eventually succeeding, and the sole course which then offered for reaching the glittering prize was to crouch unremarked in the shadow of the emperor's footstool. He was jealously precluded from the efforts which might have helped to fit him for the arduous post before him. Such instruction as he received was confined to merely literary exercises: the habit of declamation, though ostensibly the training of a Cicero or a Demosthenes, had in fact no more bearing on real affairs than the lessons of a modern schoolboy. When we read that Caius pronounced a funeral harangue over the bier of Livia at the age of fifteen; that Augustus and Julius Cæsar, and others,

Disadvantages under which he succeeded to power.

performed similar feats in still tenderer years, we must consider these exercitations as mere conventional themes, composed by rule and measure, and under a tutor's eye. As a scholar Caius showed some vivacity, and achieved, perhaps, some success; the remarks recorded of him in later years' show natural wit and cleverness:[1] but there is no reason to suppose that his mind expanded by exercise and observation, or that he ever learnt much more than what his pedagogues instilled into him.[2] Such talents and such accomplishments had none of the bone and muscle of true intellectual strength, and could impart no just self-reliance to the pupil, who entered almost at the same moment on manhood and on empire. There is, however, another respect in which the practical training of the earlier emperors, denied to Caius, aided in the development of their native genius for government. At this crisis in the life of the Roman people, when society, shaken to its basis, trembled on the verge of hopeless anarchy, the broad enunciation of a principle or theory of government might have overturned it in a moment. It was not for the safety of their rulers only that it was requisite to rest in practical expedients; it was much more essential to the welfare of the people that they should be kept in ignorance of the real views of their rulers, and allowed to indulge in the dream of independence, from which they derived their self-respect, and walked with firmer step and erecter carriage. If the substance of freedom was irretrievably lost, it would have been mere cyni-

[1] As, for instance, his calling Livia an *Ulysses in petticoats* ("Ulyxem stolatum"), and describing the style of Seneca, the philosopher, as *untempered mortar* ("arenam sine calce"). Suet. *Calig.* 23. 53.

[2] It must be allowed, however, that Josephus (*Antiq. Jud.* xix. 2. 5.) speaks highly of this prince's education, though he admits that it was nullified by the curse of his position: *ἐπρώτευσε τε τῶν κατ' αὐτὸν πολιτῶν, οὐ μὴν ἀντισχεῖν οἷα τε ἐγένετο αὐτῷ τὰ ἐκ τῆς παιδείας συλλεγέντα ἀγαθὰ πρὸς τὸν ἐπελθόντα ὄλεθρον αὐτῷ ὑπὸ τῆς ἐξουσίας.*

cism to strip them of the shadow which they still mistook for it, and deprive them of the last consolations of their brilliant servitude. This was the lesson which Augustus and Tiberius learnt in the school of experience, before their time arrived for applying it: but such a lesson was never impressed on the rude mind of their successor. Caius, when he found himself the master of a legion of slaves, felt neither shame nor scruple in proclaiming his own power, and exacting their devotion. He despised as ignoble the caution of his predecessors in disclaiming the full acknowledgment of their undoubted prerogatives. He regarded himself, not as a Princeps or Imperator, but as a King; and if he did not extort from his subjects the odious title, he allowed the idea to become impressed on them by jurists and moralists; so that we may now begin to trace the dawning in the Roman mind of the theory of royal prerogative. The complete and irresponsible power he claimed over the persons and property of his people, and even the soil on which they stood, was derived neither from hereditary nor elective right: it was the prey of the strongest, which Fate had placed in his hands, and which Force only could secure to him.[1] His wild untutored intellect could grasp, perhaps, no higher or subtler principle of authority than this: it was ever present to his mind and harassed it with perpetual anxiety: he lived in constant oscillation between the exultation of

[1] Thus, we read in Seneca, *de Benef.* vii. 4.: "Jure civili omnia Regis sunt, et tamen illa quorum ad regem pertinet universa possessio, in singulos dominos descripta sunt, et unaquæque res habet possessorem suum. . . . . Ad reges potestas omnium pertinet, ad singulos proprietas." True, he is here laying down a general principle; but its applicability to the Roman polity of his day is hardly disguised. So again (vii. 6.): "Cæsar omnia habet, fiscus ejus privata tantum ac sua; et universa in imperio ejus sunt, in patrimonio propria." Pliny (*Paneg.* 50.), praising the moderation of Trajan: "Est quod Cæsar non suum videt." Compare at a later period, Gaius, ii. 7.: "In provinciali solo dominium populi Romani est vel Cæsaris. Memento," said Caius of himself (Suet. *Calig.* 29.), "omnia mihi et in omnes licere."

unrestrained enjoyment and the depressing consciousness of danger: he strained his imagination to realize by the most wanton excesses the substance of unlimited power, at one moment as an excitement, at another as a relief and consolation.

Strange story of the priesthood of the Arician Diana.

Many instances are given of these excesses, to some of which the course of our narrative will compel us to refer. I mention one only in this place, which seems to illustrate, in a form which may be regarded, perhaps, as mythical rather than strictly true, the turn which the position of Caius gave to his reflections. In the dark recesses of the woods which overshadowed the lake of Nemus, stood a chapel of the Tauric Diana, whose sanguinary rites on the shores of the Cimmerian Bosphorus were remembered, though no longer practised, in the milder clime of Latium. Nevertheless, the belief still commonly prevailed that the priest, or *king* as he was denominated, who ministered at her altar was qualified for his office by the slaughter of his predecessor, and held it only by the tenure of strength in combat or swiftness in flight against the next aspirant. Such was the legend of the shrine, which had become embodied in the poetical ritual of Ovid, and was noted even in the graver treatise of the geographer Strabo.[1] If so wild an usage had ever actually existed, and received the sanction of authority, we may believe that it had long fallen into desuetude. But the story rendered current by the credulity of popular antiquarians excited the curiosity and horror of the vulgar; and Caius, ever logical in his deductions, and a shrewd proscriber of all hollow pretensions, affected indignation that the actual in-

[1] Ovid, *Fast.* iii. 271.:

"Regna tenent fortesque manu pedibusque fugaces,
Et perit exemplo postmodo quisque suo."

Comp. Strabo, v. 3. p. 239.: *τὸ δ' Ἀρτεμίσιον ὃ καλοῦσι Νέμος . . . καὶ γάρ τι βαρβαρικὸν κρατεῖ καὶ Σκυθικὸν περὶ τὸ ἱερὸν ἔθος· ξιφήρης οὖν ἐστὶν ἀεὶ, περισκοπῶν τὰς ἐπιθέσεις, ἕτοιμος ἀμύνεσθαι.*

cumbent of the office, the champion of the grove, should enjoy his dignified indolence unchallenged. He instigated, we are assured, a stronger man to seek him in his retreat, and required him to defend his preferment with his life.[1] We may imagine the grim satisfaction with which the imperial philosopher might reduce this theory of succession to practice. Such, at all events, was the view he took of his own position. He regarded himself, sometimes perhaps with a bitter smile, as no other than the minister of a bloody destiny, once raised to power by a deed of blood, and liable to be cast down not less suddenly by another.

Caius imbibes a notion of his own superior nature.

The contemplation of his extraordinary position as the deified autocrat of the world, lying as it did almost beyond the verge to which a Roman's imagination could at this period extend, seems to have filled this vain creature's mind with an inward assurance, which he mistook perhaps for the inspiration of divinity, that he was altogether a being of different texture from the common clay of mortality. As shepherds or herdsmen differ in species from the animals they dispose of, so, he boldly argued, must the ruler of the Roman world belong to a higher and grander existence than the troop of slaves he governs.[2] When this conception had taken possession of him, it became his passion to realize it in every outward act; to prove to himself, to manifest to the world that he was subject to none of the laws by which mere men are controlled; that his transcendental being was elevated above the restraints of all inferior existences; that he stood in incommunicable dignity far aloof from the ordinary sympathies of humanity; while no conception was so daring, no combination so preposterous, as to be beyond his power to execute. Thus, on the one hand, we find him taking a pride in showing himself inac-

[1] Suet. *Cal.* 35.: "Nemorensi regi, quod multos jam annos potiretur sacerdotio, validiorem adversarium subornavit."
[2] Philo, *leg. in Cai.* 11.

cessible to the ordinary sentiment of pity, steeling himself to the sight of pain, and at last feeling, or affecting perhaps to feel, an actual pleasure in it[1]; exulting again in the defiance of the rules of common decency, and indulging in open shamelessness of behaviour, for the mere wanton sport of offending and horrifying his associates. It was in this spirit that he complained that his reign was signalized by no great public calamity, such as the Varian massacre, or the fall of the theatre at Fidenæ.[2] On the other hand, he delighted in the execution of the most fantastic projects, to prove, as it would seem, that he was lord both of sea and land, and of all the powers of nature, and that nothing was too extravagant, nothing too amazing, for the deified Cæsar to effect. To stand on the summit of a lofty basilica and scatter money to the populace, seemed to him an act of divine munificence; to sail along the Campanian coast in enormous galleys, equipped with porticoes, baths, and banquet halls, interspersed with gardens and orchards, delighted him as a defiance of the elements.[3]

Colossal conceptions of Caius; his architectural extravagances.

We find the colossal character of this wonder-worker's conceptions running, as generally with the Roman potentates, in the direction of material constructions. *To pull down in order to re-erect, to change the square into the round;* — such, in a word, was the idea which governed the passion of the time for building, which was constantly projecting the bay of the tribune from the flat wall of the basilica, replacing

[1] It pleased him to say that he practised the ἀδιατρεψία, or steadfastness of the Stoics, in accustoming himself to gaze upon human suffering without blenching. Pliny remarks, as a peculiarity of this emperor's eyes, that they seldom or never winked: he calls them "oculi rigentes" (*H. N.* xi. 54.); but whether this was natural, or had been attained by muscular effort, he does not say.

[2] Suet *Calig.* 31.

[3] Suet. *Calig.* 37.: "Nihil tam efficere concupiscebat quàm quod posse effici negaretur."

the oblong temple of Greece with the circular dome-vaulted Pantheon, and turning the arch, the genuine invention of native art, to support story above story, and rear Antiochs and Alexandrias upon the area of Rome. To build was to create, and to create was divine. Fired with the persuasion of his august divinity, Caius rioted in the number and magnificence of his architectural undertakings. He completed the temple of Augustus, which Tiberius had left unfinished, and effected the repair or restoration of the theatre of Pompeius, which had suffered by an accidental conflagration, while he commenced an amphitheatre of his own on the site of the Septa in the Campus.[1] The great aqueduct which conveyed the waters of the Aqua Claudia to Rome, together with those of the Anio Novus, which were conducted in a separate channel above them, was also designed by Caius, though the work was far too gigantic to be accomplished during his short tenure of power. The furthest point from which these streams were carried was more than fifty-six miles from the city; but for a distance of nearly ten miles the channel was suspended on an unbroken series of arches, which in some places exceeded a hundred feet in height.[2] This was reputed in every respect the greatest of all the fine works of this kind executed at Rome; and however needless and extravagant may have been the ostentation displayed in its method of construction, we must not fail to admire the utility of its design. Several works are enumerated which Caius projected for the decoration of the provinces, but of these none perhaps were completed, nor indeed did they deserve to be so[3]; unless we except one of a different kind, the cutting of the Isthmus of Corinth, the expediency of

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 21.: "Opera sub Tiberio semiperfecta . . . absolvit."

[2] Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxxvi. 24. 10.; Frontinus, *de Aquæduct.* 13, 14.; Becker, *Rom. Alterth.* i. 704.

[3] Suet. *l. c.*: "Destinaverat et Sami Polycratis regiam restituere, Mileti Didymeum peragere." Comp. Dion, lix. 28.

which is so manifest, that it is much to be wondered that, among the many projectors who designed, none ever succeeded in effecting it. It is hardly possible to give serious credit to one of the plans ascribed to him, that of building a city in the passes of the Alps. It seems more reasonable to suspect that the people chose thus to caricature some scheme of beneficence, such, for instance, as the establishment of a hospice in the wilderness of snows.[1] The creation of harbours of refuge at Rhegium and on the opposite coast of Sicily for the corn ships which encountered the perils of the Messanian straits was worthy of a prudent government; but though designed and begun, the undertaking languished for lack of funds, and was never completed.[2] The enlargement of the palace of the Cæsars was a freak of Oriental extravagance. From the northern angle of the Palatine hill, where the modest residence of Augustus had overlooked the forum, Caius extended a series of chambers and arcades to the valley beneath, and made the temple of Castor and Pollux serve as a vestibule to the imperial abode. The emperor, it is said, would frequently take his stand between the statues of the twin deities, the guardians of the city, and thus exhibit himself for the adoration of the passers by. But he affected to converse with Jupiter himself, enshrined in the temple of the Capitol, and for this purpose he required a readier means of access to the sacred mount. Accordingly he carried a viaduct from the Palatine to the Capitoline, a bold construction, suspended above the buildings of the Velabrum, and designed, we may suppose, to rival the bridge over the Tyropœum at Jerusalem, one of the chief wonders of the Eastern metropolis, of which he had often loved to hear.[3]

The imperial palace of Caius.

His viaduct across the Velabrum.

[1] Suet. *l. c.*: "In Alpium jugo urbem condere."
[2] Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xix. 2. 5.
[3] Suet. *Calig.* 22.: "Super templum Augusti ponte transmisso

That so vast a structure should have been flung boldly across so wide and deep a gorge, and completed within the space of two or three years, may excite our wonder, and almost stagger our belief, yet it may seem still more astonishing that every remnant and vestige of it should have been swept entirely away It is probable, indeed, that this demolition was consummated within a few years after the first completion of the edifice. But this is only one out of many instances of the promptness with which the great Roman builders overthrew whatever stood in the way of newer and generally still grander designs, and transferred the enormous piles of hewn materials to fresh and often very different destinations. The most remarkable and renowned, however, of this emperor's creations was constructed of far less solid materials, and never intended perhaps to serve any other than a temporary purpose. If we may believe the accounts we have received from various authors, the great bridge of boats which Caius threw across the Baian Gulf from Bauli to Puteoli was a freak of insane vanity, the most extravagant toy, perhaps, that human folly ever invented to sport with one day and cast away the next. Between Baiæ and Bauli, on the western side of this celebrated bay, a spit of land projects a few hundred yards into the sea towards the opposite point of Puteoli, about two miles distant; and this is also nearly the depth of the arc defined by these two prominent headlands. From Puteoli, on the other hand, a mole advanced into the water, built upon arches, the remains of which extend twelve hun-

His bridge across the Gulf of Baiæ.

Palatium Capitoliumque conjunxit." The site of this temple is not known, but it may very well have been at the foot of the Palatine and of the house of Augustus. The width of the valley from crest to crest is above two hundred yards. Pliny takes occasion from this junction of one quarter of the city with another to say, with a bold perversion of language, that Caius *surrounded* Rome with his palace: "Bis vidimus urbem totam cingi domibus principum Caii et Neronis." *Hist. Nat.* xxxvi. 24. 5.

dred feet; and thus there existed on either side of the bay the rudiments, the one natural the other artificial, of a complete mole or breakwater. It was by a parallel mound or bank at the bottom of this bay that the sea was excluded from the Lucrine Lake and the Avernus beyond it. The great work of Agrippa, who converted this lake into a haven by perforating the mound with a ship-canal, has been noticed in an earlier chapter. It was not beyond the means, nor above the bold conception, of a wise and paternal ruler to improve on this political masterpiece, by the construction of a mole, vast, indeed, as its dimensions must have been both in length and depth, at the entrance of the outer gulf. Such was the principle of the works effected by the steadfast energy of a later emperor, which still exist at Civita Vecchia or Centumcellæ; and the great amount of shipping which must have been often assembled at Puteoli, as well as the importance of its cargoes, might have justified the expense and grandeur of such an undertaking. But no such purpose can be ascribed to Caius; his object was as selfish as the means he employed were showy and unsubstantial. The ancient legends of the bay ascribed the dyke of the Lucrine, a broad shingle-bank thrown up in the course of ages by the sea, to the creative power of Hercules; and the ambition to vie with the man-god was more powerful with the self-styled divinity, who affected to rival him, than any magnificent conceptions of imperial policy. He ransacked, we are told, the havens far and near to collect every vessel he could lay hands on, till commerce was straitened in every quarter, and Italy itself threatened with famine. These vessels he yoked together side by side, in a double line, extending from one shore to the other.[1] On this broad and well-compacted base

[1] Dion, lix. 17.: *ἀφ' οὗπερ καὶ λιμὸς ἔν τε τῇ 'Ιταλίᾳ καὶ ἐν 'Ρώμῃ μάλιστα ἰσχυρὸς ἐγένετο.* We may be allowed to suspect that this state-

he placed an enormous platform of timber; this again he covered with earth, and paved, after the manner of a military highroad, with stones hewn and laid in cement. The way thus *built* was furnished with numerous stations or post-houses, for the use of which fresh water was conveyed by an aqueduct from the continent.[1] Such, it seems, was this extraordinary bridge: it could never have been intended to retain it permanently; it was doubtless necessary to restore the vessels which had been pressed into the service of the prince's vanity; but he determined before abandoning his work to enact on it a peculiar pageant, the novelty and brilliancy of which should transcend every recorded phantasy of kings or emperors.[2] The venerable seer Thrasyllus had prophesied, it seems, at an earlier period that the young Caius would no more become emperor than he would ever drive his chariot across the gulf of Baiæ.[3] Caius had indeed attained to power, yet the words might still ring ominously in his ears; pride and superstition combined, perhaps, to urge him on, and he declared that he would drive across the bay, not alone in his chariot, but attended by an army, and arrayed as an emperor indeed. The great world of Rome mustered on the

ment is founded upon a remark of Seneca which will hardly bear it out. *De Brev. Vit.* 18.: "Dum ille pontes navibus jungit, et viribus imperii ludit, aderat . . . . alimentorum egestas. Exitio pæne et fame constitit . . . . superbi regis imitatio." But the scarcity he speaks of occurred at the moment of Caius's death, which was two years later, when there was found, it was said, to be no more than seven or eight days' consumption of corn in the granaries.

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 19.; Dion, lix. 17.; Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xix. 1. The first makes the length 3600 paces, the second 26 stades, the last 30 stades; but the real distance is about two miles.

[2] Suet. *l. c.*: "Novum atque inauditum genus spectaculi excogitavit." Eumenius (*Paneg. in Constant.* 13.) alludes to this pageant, which he calls, in his courtly language, "Delicata vectatio principis otiosi." Clinton, *Fast. Rom.* App. p. 5.

[3] Suet. *l. c.*: "Non magis Caium imperaturum quam per Baianum sinum equis discursurum." The author tells us that he had as a boy heard his grandfather mention this, as supposed in the palace to have been the real motive for this whimsical undertaking.

shores around to witness the imperial miracle. From Puteoli to Misenum the semicircle of the bay was crowded with admiring multitudes; the loungers of the baths and porticoes sallied forth from their cool retreats; the promenaders of the Lucrine beach checked their palanquins and chariots, and hushed the strains of their delicious symphonies; the terraces of the gorgeous villas which lined the coast, and breasted the fresh and sparkling ripple, glittered with streamers of a thousand colours, and with the bright array of senators and matrons, drowning the terrors which day and night beset them in shrieks of childish acclamation. The clang of martial music echoed from shore to shore. From Bauli the emperor descended upon the bridge—having first sacrificed to the gods, and chiefly to Neptune and Envy—arrayed in a coat of mail adorned with precious gems, which had been worn by Alexander the Great, with his sword by his side, his shield on his arm, and crowned with a chaplet of oak-leaves.[1] On horseback, followed by a dense column of soldiers, he traversed the solid footway, and charged into Puteoli as a conquering foe. There he indulged his victorious army with a day of rest and expectation. On the morrow he placed himself in a triumphal car, and drove back exulting, in the garb of a charioteer of the Green, at the games of the Circus. The mock triumph was adorned by pretended captives, represented by some royal hostages from Parthia, at the time in custody of the Roman government. The army followed in long procession. In the centre of the bridge the emperor halted, and addressed an harangue to his soldiers on the greatness of their

[1] Suet. Dion, *ll. cc.* These sacrifices seem hardly in accordance with Caius's character, but that to Livor or Envy is perhaps significant in connexion with Hercules:

"Diram qui contudit Hydram . . . .
Comperit *invidiam* supremo fine domari."

Hor. *Epist.* ii. 2. 10.

victory, from a tribunal erected for the purpose. He contrasted the narrow stream of the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, at most seven stades in width, with the broad ocean which he had yoked in chains, and declared that the exploits of Xerxes and Darius were trifles compared with his mightier enterprise.[1] After wearying both himself and his hearers with this prodigious folly, he distributed money among them, and invited them to a banquet. At this entertainment the emperor retained his place on the bridge, but the soldiers were collected around him for the most part in vessels. It extended far into the night, and at nightfall the bridge and the ships were illuminated with torches, and at the signal the whole curving line of coast shone forth, as in a theatre, with innumerable lights.[2] Charmed with the stillness of the water, and the brilliancy reflected upon it, the populace crowded round in boats, and partook of the mirth and festivity. But their holiday did not end without a frightful disaster, many of the spectators in the boats or on the bridge being jostled accidentally into the waves. Those who fell, and those who might have saved them, were, it seems, equally intoxicated: the light was uncertain; no one gave, or none received, orders; and the emperor himself, we are told, was overcome with wine: whether drunk or sober, it is

[1] It is remarkable that there should be no allusions to this exploit in Pliny or the poets, to whom it might often have furnished an apt illustration; as, for instance, when Juvenal says:

> "Quidquid *Græcia mendax*
> Audet in historia, cum stratum classibus isdem
> Suppositumque rotis solidum mare." x. 174.

or Lucan:

> "Tales fama canit tumidum super æquora Xerxem
> Construxisse vias, *multum cum pontibus ausus*
> Europamque Asiæ, Sestonque admovit Abydo."
> *Phars.* ii. 672.

[2] The description of Dion is more than usually vivid: *τοῦ γὰρ χωρίου μηνοειδοῦς ὄντος, πῦρ πανταχόθεν, καθάπερ ἐν θεάτρῳ τίνι, ἐδείχθη, ὥστε μηδεμίαν αἴσθησιν τοῦ σκότου γενέσθαι· καὶ γὰρ τὴν νύκτα ἡμέραν, ὥσπερ του τὴν θάλασσαν γῆν, ποιῆσαι ἠθέλησεν.* lix. 17.

not impossible that he enjoyed the horror of the scene, and even forbade assistance to be rendered to the sufferers.[1]

Extravagant luxury of the table.

Among the tasteless extravagances of the day there was none to which the vulgar rich more commonly devoted themselves than that of the table. It was not so much their ambition to surround themselves with the most graceful or gorgeous appliances of luxury, with richly furnished chambers, with exquisite music, with couches and tables of costly materials and elaborate workmanship, though all these too had their votaries, as to amaze their guests with the extraordinay money value of the articles they managed to consume. It was for their rarity only that nightingales and peacocks, and the tongue and brain of phœnicopters, whatever these creatures may be, could be regarded as delicacies; still less could it give any pleasure to the palate to swallow pearls dissolved in powerful acids. But such was the rampant luxury of Caius, in which he strove to imitate or rather to outdo the Oriental Cleopatra. In this and other particulars of the same kind he succeeded probably in surpassing all previous examples: he contrived, we are assured, to expend the amount of eighty thousand pounds sterling on a single repast; and having effected this, he could say complacently, *a man should be frugal, except he be a Cæsar.*[2] This vehement ambition to be the

[1] Suetonius says plainly (*Calig.* 32.): "Quum multos e litore invitasset ad se, repente omnes præcipitavit. Quosdam gubernacula apprehendentes, contis remisque detrusit in mare." But according to Dion the intoxication was general: ἐμπλησθεὶς δὲ καὶ ὑπερκορῆς καὶ σίτου καὶ μέθης, γενόμενος, συχνοὺς μὲν τῶν ἑταίρων ἐς τὴν θάλασσαν ἀπὸ τῆς γεφύρας, ἔῤῥιψε, συχνοὺς δὲ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐς πλοίοις ἐμβόλους ἔχουσι παραπλεύσας κατέδυσεν, ὥστε καὶ ἀπολέσθαι τίνας· οἱ γὰρ πλείους καίπερ μεθύοντες, ἐσώθησαν.

[2] Suet. *Calig.* 37.: "Aut frugi esse hominem oportere aut Cæsarem." Comp. Senec. *Cons. ad Helv.* 9. 11. The famous epicure Apicius, in the reign of Tiberius, was said to have devoured in his career of good living a hundred millions of sesterces, or 800,000*l.*, and to

first in everything he deigned to undertake, extended to many unworthy objects besides gluttony and charioteering. It was a little better directed when the Cæsar presented himself before the senate or the tribunals as an orator, and made perhaps some effort of mind and understanding to deserve the acclamations which were only too sure to follow. On one occasion, at least, a man who had unfortunately incurred his displeasure was saved by sacrificing his own reputation as a speaker to the vanity of his imperial antagonist.[1] But even the victims of tyranny might not always show such forbearance towards it, and Caius, in the midst of the applause with which his genius was greeted, must have frequently felt mortification at the real hollowness of his pretensions. His passion for fame degenerated, as might be expected in so base and selfish a nature, into a brutal envy of the fame of others, and a passion for destroying every well-earned reputation. He caused, we are told, the statues of the heroes of the republic, which Augustus had set up in the Campus, to be overthrown and broken, so that the names could not be restored to the figures they belonged to[2]; after which he issued a decree, which itself was not perhaps unreasonable, though opposed to the most cherished customs of antiquity, that no statue of a living man should be erected, at least without a special authorization from the chief of the state. He proceeded, however, with still baser spite to deprive the images of illustrious houses of the insignia by which they were distinguished; as, for instance, the Cincinnati of their ringlets, and the Torquati of

Caius affects to be an orator.

His spite against great reputations of various kinds.

have put an end to his life when he found that he had only ten millions, or 80,000*l.*, left.

[1] See the story of Domitius Afer in Dion, lix. 19.: *ἀπεῖπε μὲν οὐδὲν οὐδὲ ἀπελογήσατο, θαυμάζειν δὲ δὴ καὶ καταπεπλῆχθαι τὴν δεινότητα τοῦ Γαΐου προσποιησάμενος . . . . ἐπήνει.*

[2] Suet. *Culig.* 34.: "Ut restitui salvis titulis non potuerint."

their golden collars. He forbade the last collateral descendant of the great Pompeius to bear the surname of Magnus; nor would he allow the modest worth of Agrippa to be honoured by placing his effigies, as in the Pantheon and elsewhere, by the side of those of Augustus.[1] Descended himself from this plebeian statesman, he resented his origin as degrading to a Cæsar, and let it be understood that he was actually the grandson of Augustus, through an incestuous commerce with the unhappy Julia.[2] He heaped his insensate injuries not less basely on another description of greatness, in commanding the works of Virgil and Livy to be removed from the libraries; for the one, he said, had neither genius nor learning, the other was a negligent blunderer.[3] He even threatened to abolish the immortal songs of Homer. *Plato expelled the father of fiction from his state; why,* he asked, *should not I from mine?* With such principles of conduct, or rather with such impulses, it might be expected that the tyrant would deride with a sneer the curious labours of the jurists, and accordingly, we are told, that he proposed not only to abolish the institution of the jurisconsults, but even threatened to annul every existing canon in Rome and throughout the empire, and make his own word and will the sole measure of law to mankind.[4]

Caius really impressed with a notion of his own divinity.

Such were the passionate freaks by which this infatuated being strove to realize to himself the omnipotence which he claimed. In the strange perverted state of religious conceptions at the period, I see no reason to doubt

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 23.: Dion, lx. 5. [2] Suet. *Calig. l. c.*

[3] In this, as in other cases, it seems not impossible that the extravagance imputed to Caius is a blind or wilful perversion of his enemies. A deficiency of invention in Virgil and of accuracy in Livy may surely be admitted by emperor or author without the imputation of unworthy jealousy.

[4] Suet. *Calig.* 34.; Philo, *leg. ad Cai.* 17.: *νόμον γὰρ ἡγούμενος αὑτὸν, τοὺς τῶν ἑκασταχοῦ νομοθετῶν ὡς κενὰς ῥήσεις ἔλυεν.*

that Caius was really possessed with a vague notion of his own divinity.[1] The gods of those days, if they did not actually touch the earth, flitted, at least, very near to its surface. To partake in some sense or other of the godhead was the dream of philosophers as well as the boast of tyrants. Nor was Caius capable of that lofty irony with which Augustus or Tiberius could look with complacent scorn on the flatteries of vulgar courtiers. It was not difficult to persuade him of the truth of that which all around him asserted; nor had he sufficient power of reasoning, when any misgiving of the fact obtruded itself, to analyse the idea of divinity, and compare his humanity with it. This is far from the same thing as a conviction of the fact itself. Caius, we may suppose, was, from the feeble constitution of his mind, incapable of a steadfast conviction, or of grasping truth at all. His intellect was passively recipient in such matters: he imbibed the notions suggested to him, and if occasionally he sported with them in the exuberance of his levity, we are not to suppose that he scornfully disbelieved the character with which the world had invested him. The divinity, indeed, which he affected was something very different from the moral inspiration claimed by his predecessors. It was all outward and sensuous. In his passion for scenic representation, he delighted to array himself in the garb of Hercules or Bacchus, or even of Juno and Venus, to brandish the club or the thyrsus, or disguise himself in a female headdress, and enact the part of the deity in the temples or in his private

[1] Hoeck, who only wants the faculty of imagination to be an historian of a high class, cannot comprehend the fact of this belief. I am sensible how imperfect is my account of the phenomenon, but I feel no difficulty in crediting it:

"Nihil est quod credere de se
Non possit cum laudatur Dîs æqua potestas."

Juvenal, iv. 70.

apartments.[1] Whatever god he affected to be, the senate and people shouted vehemently around him, with the admiration of spectators in a theatre rather than the reverence of worshippers.

Systematic persecution of the nobles

Our accounts of the principate of Caius have not generally preserved the regular order of events. The building of the bridge is placed by Dion, our only annalist, in 792, and it is probable that the triumphal show was exhibited in the spring of that year. This era is important, as marking apparently the final exhaustion of the ordinary revenues of the state, which sank under this wild paroxysm of extravagance, and required a new development of tyranny to recruit them. From this period we may date the confirmed and systematic persecution of the rich nobility, which gave this reign, notwithstanding all the fair promise of its commencement, a bad pre-eminence in crime in the eyes of the senate. Hitherto, amidst all his follies or atrocities, Caius had continued still to wear the mask with which he had begun his career, and professed to abominate the conduct of his predecessor and to abjure his policy. The creatures of the Tiberian government, those especially who had made themselves detested by delation, were still in disgrace; and the vituperation of the late emperor, in which many tongues were now heard to indulge, had been regarded as a passport to favour with his successor. The senate continued to indulge in this delusion to the last; until Caius, resolved to repair his fortunes by a course of prosecution and confiscation, and to revive in all its horrors the application of the law of majesty, ventured to introduce his new policy by an open panegyric on the ruler he had so lately denounced. If we are to believe the historian, he did not pretend to the grace of consistency. *I am emperor,* he exclaimed, to the amazement of his auditors, *and I may say one thing to-day and the*

[1] Dion, lix. 26.

contrary to-morrow: but it is not for you, citizens and subjects, to assail the memory of him who was once your chief. He then proceeded to enumerate the persons who had perished under Tiberius, and showed, or pretended to show, that in almost every case they had been the victims of the senate rather than of the emperor; some had accused them, others had borne false witness against them, all had combined in voting for their destruction. *Moreover,* he continued with pitiless logic, *if Tiberius was in fault, you should not have decreed him honours in his lifetime, or having done so, you should not after his death have annulled them. You it was, senators,* he exclaimed, *who swelled the pride of Sejanus by your flatteries, and then destroyed the monster you had yourselves created. You wronged your prince; you murdered his minister: I can look for no good at your hands.* And then he went on to introduce the prosopopœia of Tiberius himself addressing him, approving of all he had said, and recommending him to love none of them, nor to spare any: *for they all hate you, they all wish for your death, and they will kill you if they can. Then look not to pleasing them, nor care for what they say of you; but care only for your own will and pleasure, and provide, as is meet and right, for your own august safety.* At the end of this wild harangue Caius ordained that the laws of majesty should be again enforced, and that they should be graven afresh on brazen tablets. The senate and people trembled, we are told, alike at the visions of terror which were opened to them. The fathers were at first struck dumb and could make no reply; the next day they met together again to pay servile court to the tyrant. They lauded his speech as a monument of truth and regard to his uncle's memory, thanked him for his mercy in pardoning them and suffering them still to live, and decreed that his

Caius eulogizes the government of Tiberius.

august words should be recited annually in their hearing, and sacrifices performed to the imperial clemency. To these compliments were added the more ordinary honours of a golden statue, a choral festival, and an ovation.[1]

Bantering humour peculiar to Caius.

It is hardly possible to resist the impression that these proceedings have been represented to us in a grotesque caricature; nor is that impression diminished when we come to examine the details of the persecution which followed. Yet there is a certain consistency in the ghastly banter which equally in the pages of Dion and Suetonius, of Josephus and Philo, forms the peculiar feature in the character of this tyrant among his kindred. The Romans were astounded at the deposition of their consuls from office for neglecting, so little even yet had the etiquette of royalty been established among them, to ordain a festival on the anniversary of the emperor's birthday. They were still more scandalized at three days being suffered to pass without the appointment of their successors, and the republic being left for that interval without its highest magistrates.[2] It seems, however, that Caius assigned another motive for the disgrace of these consuls. They had kept holiday for the victory of Augustus over Antonius. Now Augustus was the grandfather of the emperor's mother Agrippina; but, on the other hand, Antonius bore the same relation to his father Germanicus; and we are told that he had whimsically declared beforehand, that, whether they mourned or feasted on the occasion, he would convict them equally of treason.[3] Even when the cupidity of the ever-needy

[1] Dion, lix. 16.

[2] Suet. *Calig.* 26.: "Consulibus oblitis de natali suo edicere abrogavit magistratum, fuitque triduo sine summa potestate respublica."

[3] Dion (lix. 20) places this event under the year 792. Caius commenced it as consul with L. Apronius. He laid down the office himself after thirty days, and was succeeded by Sanquinius. Apronius held the office six months. It does not appear who were

despot demanded the blood of the wealthiest senators, he could still make sport of his own tyranny. Thus we read that when, on the condemnation and death of Junius Priscus, his wealth was found to fall much below the amount anticipated, the emperor affected to regret that his victim had deceived him, and thrown away his own life through want of candour. The condemnation at this time of L. Annæus Seneca, distinguished at a later period as one of the chief of Roman philosophers, seems to show that he had become already noted for the riches which have thrown some slur on his reputation as a teacher of wisdom. He was saved by the assurance conveyed by a friend that he was already far advanced in a decline, and that his possessions might soon be grasped without even the trouble of a prosecution. Caius had devised various means for drawing into his coffers the estates of the rich nobles on their deaths. In this case the accused was allowed, perhaps, to compound for life by bequeathing his property to the emperor, and sacrificing on the altar of his Clemency. It is to this insatiable cupidity that we may, perhaps, ascribe an act of cruelty, which, as it is represented to us, seems such a mere ferocious caprice that we should hesitate to believe it of any but a confirmed madman. I can only give the story in the words of Philo, and leave it to the reader to form his own conclusions upon it. *Caius, they say, lying one night sleepless, began to think of the noble exiles in the islands, and how, though nominally suffering pains and penalties,*

Massacre of the exiles.

the unfortunate consuls who suffered from this frolic. One of them put himself to death from mortification; but, as Caius's birthday was August 31., and the battle of Actium Sept. 2., we must conclude that the deposition took place in September. Dion goes on to say that Caius hereupon resumed the consulship, abolished the comitia, and appointed Domitius Afer his colleague. But as he went into Gaul, as we shall see, this same year with the avowed object of engaging in a campaign, for which the season must have been very far advanced in October, the story is liable to some suspicion.

they were actually enjoying a life of ease, quiet, and luxury. "What sort of exile," he said to himself, "is this foreign sojourn of theirs, revelling as they do in abundance of all good things, and living in a pleasant retirement the lives of true philosophers?" And thereupon he issued orders to put the most illustrious of them to death, Flaccus, the late prefect of Alexandria, being first on the list. It would seem at least from this anecdote, as has been elsewhere intimated, that the ordinary condition of the exiles was one of considerable indulgence, and that they were allowed the enjoyment of their fortunes. That the emperor should have caused some of the wealthiest to be executed upon very trifling pretexts in order to seize on their possessions seems only too probable.[1]

The populace alienated by taxation.

But the spendthrift put no curb on his lavish prodigality, and his necessities became more and more urgent continually. Had he limited his demands for plunder to the class of the wealthy aristocracy, he might have still retained the favour of the populace, on whose amusements so much of his ill-gotten riches was expended; but when, in order to provide a more certain and constant flow of gold into his coffers, he ventured to smite the mass of the citizens with new or increased taxation, he converted the whole Roman people into an enemy, and stood thenceforth naked in the eyes of history, without friend or apologist. The conquering nation, whatever else it had lost, still retained an excessive jealousy of taxation, which it blindly confounded with tribute. It was still the privilege of the Roman, whatever other distinctions he had surrendered, to be exempt from the most direct imposts. It was still

[1] Philo, *in Flacc.* sub fin. Comp. Dion, lix. 18. and Suet. *Calig.* 28., who gives a still finer point to the story. "Revocatum quendam a vetere exilio sciscitatus, quidnam ibi facere consuesset, respondente eo per adulationem, Deos semper oravi ut, quod evenit, periret Tiberius et tu imperares; opinans sibi quoque exules suos mortem imprecari, misit circum insulas qui universos contrucidarent."

the fiction of the commonwealth that the Roman paid in personal service the contribution for the support of his empire, which was commuted to the subject for money. But in fact, at this time, the citizen was using every endeavour to escape both from one burden and the other, and the light taxation which Augustus had already imposed upon him barely compensated for the general relaxation of his civil and military obligations. It might have been the wish of a wise and benevolent ruler to equalize the burdens of the empire by bringing Italy under the same fiscal yoke as the provinces. But neither Augustus nor Tiberius had ventured to levy custom on the commerce or productions of that favoured spot; and the decree by which Caius now imposed a rate on imports at the harbours on the coast, and at the gates of the cities in the interior, and even of Rome itself, must be taken as a token of caprice or tyranny rather than of an equitable intelligence. Yet it might not be unreasonable to suppose that the fees he exacted from suitors before the tribunals were intended to improve the position of the judges, and render the course of justice more pure; and even the tax he is said to have levied upon prostitution may have been meant as a measure of policy and outward decorum. It is easy to understand the outcry it would raise, and the gross charges it might suggest against the emperor himself.[1] It was believed that, among less innocent contrivances for raising his revenues, he had actually succeeded in making gold, of excellent quality, but so little in quantity as not to defray the expense of the manufacture.[2] It is not improbable that he attained the same end by debasing the currency.[3] The delight

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 40. [2] Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxxiii. 22.

[3] Thus we find that, "Emptum plus minus asse Caïano," was an expression for anything particularly worthless. Stat. *Sylv.* iv. 9. 22. The copper coinage of Caius was called in by his successor. Dion, lx. 22.

with which he contemplated the gold he thus amassed was represented as something monstrous and insane: at times it was affirmed he would cause it to be spread in heaps upon the floor, and wade in it with bare feet, or fling himself down and roll frantically upon it.[1] Whatever favour he may have once enjoyed with the populace from the splendour of the shows with which he indulged them,—a favour which was already, perhaps, beginning to wane from satiety, and even from disgust,—it was speedily swallowed up in feelings of indignation and resentment. The universal selfishness which he had so long pampered turned in a mass against him. The citizens refused to obey in the theatre his signal to applaud or to condemn: they beheld with indifference the feats of the imperial athlete himself; the shows and games, which they had regarded almost as their daily food, ceased at last to attract them[2]; and it was probably in vexation at this sullen yet passive disobedience, which baffled both his menaces and caresses, that he uttered his well-known exclamation, accompanied no doubt with the significant gesture by which he intimated his cruel will to his headsmen, *Would that the people of Rome had but one neck!*[3]

Caius undertakes an expedition against the Germans.

We may place the mummery of the Baian triumph in the spring or early summer of 792, the season when the Campanian coast was most thronged with lounging and gazing multitudes, and which on that account would most probably be chosen for the emperor's grand act

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 42.

[2] We shall the less wonder at the self-restraint on their part if we accept literally the story of Suetonius, that he amused himself sometimes by causing the awning in the circus to be withdrawn, and forbidding the scorched spectators from retiring. It must be remembered, however, that as the circus was never more than partially veiled, a large portion of the multitude must have always been exposed to the heat of the sun. Suet. *Calig.* 26.

[3] Suet. *Calig.* 30. 32. Comp. Senec. *Apocolocynt.* 6. "Gestu illo solutæ manus . . . . quo decollare homines solebat."

of self-glorification. This, we are told, was promptly followed by the fiercest access of his tyranny and the increasing exactions which his empty treasury required. But nearly at the same moment Caius,—I follow now implicitly the accounts we have received, —pretended to have a nobler object in view. On making a progress to the Clitumnus, two or three days' journey from Rome, in the autumn of the same year, he remarked how slender was the number of his escort of Batavian horsemen, and the thought came suddenly into his head that the battalion might be recruited by a successful incursion into the German territories. He announced that the barbarians were encroaching on the Roman frontiers, and required his powerful arm to check them; but his mind was filled at once with visions of the sums he might extort from the provincials both of Gaul and Spain, to replenish his coffers, and slake his craving thirst for gold. From the Clitumnus, accordingly, he set out, apparently without even returning to Rome; the legions and auxiliaries he required for his expedition were directed with all speed to follow. For his own part his march was irregular and intermittent; sometimes so rapid that his guards could hardly keep up with him, even though they laid their colours on the backs of their animals; sometimes, again, so tardy and deliberate that he was borne himself on men's shoulders, and the cities through which he was to pass were required to sweep the roads and lay the dust before him.[1] He was attended throughout by a train of players and gladiators, dancers and women, the vile retinue of a Parthian sovereign. On reaching the camp on the Rhine, he displayed his sense of discipline by animadverting severely on the officers whose contingents were slow

[1] Suetonius (*Calig.* 43.) speaks of this expedition as a sudden thought, which is quite consistent with the character before us. Dion (lix. xxi.) differs upon this and other minor points; but in general the two accounts agree remarkably.

in arriving at head-quarters: some whose term of service was on the point of expiring, he degraded, on the pretext of their age and infirmities, and reduced the pay or pensions of the veterans to one-half of the sum guaranteed them.[1] But after all there was no enemy to chastise; and the young warrior devised the expedient of sending a few captives across the river, and placing them in concealment, while the alarm was sounded in the prætorium that the foe was at hand. Thereupon, rising hastily from table with his guests, he galloped, attended by a few body-guards only, into the wood, dispersed the pretended adversaries, plucked some branches from the trees, and suspended on them the trophies of his victory: then returning, he upbraided the legions which had lagged behind, and rewarded his companions with a new kind of military chaplet, in which the sun, moon, and stars were represented, and to which he gave the name of *the crown exploratory*. But enough of this mummery. The pretended victory, we are told, was duly notified in a laurelled letter to the senate; and the fathers were petulantly upbraided for indulging in their banquets, their baths and theatres, while their emperor was exposing his august person to the darts of the barbarians. At the same time the submission of a fugitive prince from Britain was accepted and blazoned forth as the capitulation of the whole island.

Explanation of the foregoing narrative.

To me indeed it seems impossible to mistake the spirit of caricature in which these accounts are written; and even had we no clue to a better understanding of the circumstances, I should be little disposed to confide in them. But it will be remembered how, towards the close of the reign of Tiberius, the command of the legions on the Rhine was left by him reluctantly in the hands of a chief whom he had not the courage to dispossess. Lentulus Gætulicus had defied the emperor, and the

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 44.

emperor had succumbed to his menaces. Tiberius was old and timid, and satisfied perhaps that the obedience of the legions would at least last his own time: but Caius partook neither of his fears nor his confidence. The relaxation of discipline by this legate had given occasion to attacks on the part of the Germans. But it was much more dangerous to the imperator, as a token of independence on the part of his own officer; and it was with the bold determination, as I conceive, to put down this rising spirit, that Caius, under pretence of defending the frontiers, left Rome for Gaul, to defend himself and his imperial authority. In daring Caius was not deficient; perhaps he had not sense enough fairly to estimate the dangers which beset him. But at such a crisis daring was the best wisdom, and the apparition of the redoubted emperor in the midst of a disaffected camp, together with some examples of sternness, which showed that he was not to be trifled with, may have actually saved the state from a bloody and bootless revolution.

Caius at Lugdunum.

The senators, in the tyrant's absence, to return to the narrative before us, were indulging in a happy respite from their troubles, and had willingly offered vows in the temples for every success he could desire, and recommended the provinces to follow their example.[1] As the season drew to a close Caius repaired to Lugdunum, the spot from which Augustus and Germanicus had directed the administration of the country, and conducted its census. From hence he issued requisitions to the cities for extraordinary contributions, and devised methods of extorting money from the nobles. Offences against the state were investigated and multiplied,

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 45. Philo, alluding to these religious ceremonies, describes them not as thanksgivings for victories gained, but as vows for future successes. Comp. *leg. ad Cai.* in a passage already referred to (c. 45.): *καὶ γὰρ ἐθύσαμεν* . . . say the Jewish envoys . . . *πρῶτον μὲν* . . . *τρίτον δὲ, κατὰ τὴν ἐλπίδα τῆς Γερμανικῆς νίκης.*

and punishment only redeemed by the payment of heavy fines. So well was he satisfied, it would seem, by these experiments, of the actual riches of his Gaulish subjects, that he conceived an extraordinary plan for diverting a large portion of them, with little risk or trouble, into his own coffers. Orders were despatched to Rome to transmit to Lugdunum the costly furniture and decorations of some of the imperial residences. These it was determined to sell by auction, and it was expected that the vanity of the admiring natives would induce them to pay profusely for objects of such peculiar interest. The precious goods arrived, transported by innumerable carriages and beasts of burden, the requisition for which sufficed for a time to cripple the industry of Italy; and Caius himself, as auctioneer, explained and eulogized the several articles, and urged his courtiers to bid warmly against each other. *This*, he said, *is a vase or statue which Antonius sent from Egypt; that is a gem or picture which Augustus brought with him from the East; this was a trophy of my father's; this was a trinket of my mother's.*[1] Such a recommendation was of course felt as a command, and the sale proceeded gloriously. The sums, however, thus scraped together were flung the next moment away. A large portion was spent in a donative to the Gallic legions; not less perhaps was squandered on the games which were now solemnized in the Gallic capital. The provincial nobles had already instituted games in honour of Augustus, which were enacted before his altar: the lively genius of the nation had begun to emulate the literary efforts of Greece and Rome, and contests in eloquence and versification held a prominent place in these exhibitions. Whatever might be the merit of these trials of wit and fancy, Caius, with the low humour natural to him, proceeded to degrade them by the unseemly

Auction of the imperial effects.

[1] Dion, lix. 21.; Suet. *Calig.* 39.

penalties he inflicted on the unsuccessful competitors, some of whom were required to obliterate their compositions with their tongues, or be cast headlong into the furious waters of the Rhone.[1]

Conspiracy against Caius.

Whatever were the freaks of cruelty or folly with which the tyrant actually disgraced his sojourn among the Gauls, yet if we view the enterprise in the light in which I have ventured to place it, as a bold stroke of defensive policy, we shall be disposed to look with some indulgence on the bloody executions with which it is said to have been attended. Whether it be the case that Gætulicus resented his chief's intrusion by conspiring against his life and power, or whether the sentence of death which now descended on him was only a tyrant's measure of precaution, there can be little doubt that the position he occupied was incompatible with the dignity or safety of the imperial throne. There seems, however, reason to surmise that he laid himself open to the blow by an act of direct provocation. Caius was accompanied into Gaul by his surviving sisters, and by some of the habitual companions of his pleasures among the nobility of Rome. Of these none was so conspicuous as M. Æmilius Lepidus, the youthful minion before mentioned, whom he had united to Drusilla, and whom, as was generally believed, he had intended to associate with her in the succession. The weakness of the emperor's health, and his late severe illness, might have seemed for a moment to bring this splendid inheritance almost within reach of the fortunate aspirant. The sceptre of the world, for which the Æmilii had so often contended, seemed about to descend into his grasp. But the death of his patron's favourite sister suddenly obscured the prospect. Still doomed to a private station, he con-

Execution of Gætulicus and Lepidus, and disgrace of Livia and Agrippina.

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 20. Comp. the allusion of Juvenal: "Lugdunensem rhetor dicturus ad aram" (i. 44.).

tinued perhaps to brood over his disappointment; and it is not improbable that the charge now advanced against Lepidus, of intriguing with Julia or Agrippina, or even with both at once, and of combining with them to overthrow the ruler of the state, was in fact substantially true. The authority and abilities of Gætulicus, if gained to their side, would lend strength to the blow; and discontented as he probably was, and perhaps alarmed for his own safety, nothing is more likely than that Gætulicus was drawn, as some accounts represented, into their conspiracy. Such at least was the statement which Caius caused to be circulated. The secret of the plot was betrayed, and its leaders seized and cut off in Gaul, at the end of the year 792. The guilty sisters were condemned to banishment, and Agrippina was compelled to carry the urn containing her paramour's ashes on foot to Rome. In the account of this affair which Caius transmitted to the senate for publication, he disclosed without reserve every particular of their wanton and shameless lives; though the Romans were fully persuaded that, however vicious they had proved themselves, the brother had been their seducer, and the partner of their worst iniquities. At the same time he sent three swords, which he declared had been intended for his assassination, with directions that they should be suspended as votive offerings in the temple of Mars the Avenger. As his sisters, at his desire, had received many distinctions from the senate; he enjoined that in the future no such extraordinary marks of favour should be conferred on any of his own relations.[1]

An ovation decreed on the suppression of this conspiracy.

On receiving their master's account of the conspiracy he had detected, and the danger from which he had relieved the state by its discovery, the senators had hastily sent a deputation to convey their humble congratulations,

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 24., *Claud.* 9.; Dion, lix. 22.

and offer him the honours of an ovation: but he complained of the number of the envoys as beneath the importance of the occasion, and of the ovation as unworthy of so great an achievement; he treated his visitors as spies, and particularly resented the mission of Claudius, who accompanied them, as sent to direct and admonish him with the authority of an uncle. He was on the Rhine at the time of their arrival; and it was said that, in his ill-humour, he even suffered Claudius to be thrown into the stream. Great was the terror which this reception created at Rome, where dire apprehensions already reigned of the proscriptions which might be expected to follow on the recent disclosures. The furious caprices of the emperor were manifested again in his sudden repudiation of Lollia, whom he accused of sterility, and the advancement of Milonia Cæsonia, with whom he was known to have been for some time connected, to the perilous honour of his hand. This woman, whose name was long held in detestation, is represented to us as neither young nor handsome; but it was believed that she had attracted and retained her lover's interest by the use of philtres, which contributed to unsettle his mind, and render him more intractable than ever. Cæsonia had borne three children to a former husband, and was far advanced in pregnancy at the time of this marriage. When, however, a daughter was born to him within a month of the nuptial solemnity, Caius did not scruple to acknowledge the child as actually his own, to carry it to the temples of the gods, to lay it in the lap of Minerva, and to give it the Cæsarean appellation of Julia Drusilla.[1]

Caius marries Milonia Cæsonia.

[1] Dion, lix. 23. 28.; Juv. vi. 16.; Suet. *Calig.* 25.; Joseph. *Antiq.* xix. 1. Suetonius assures us that the emperor was the more convinced that the child was his own, by the ferocity it showed from its birth, attacking with its nails the eyes and countenances of its playfellows. It should be observed that Dion speaks of its being carried

Caius assumes a third consulship, A. D. 40, A. U. 793.

From Gaul Caius had announced to the senate that he was about to assume the consulship for the third time at the commencement of 793 at Lugdunum, and had at the same time indicated whom he required to accept it as his colleague. But this nominee happening to die a few days before the first day of January, the fathers were thrown into perplexity, the tribunes and prætors not venturing to convene the senate on their own responsibility while there was still a consul absent from the city. They rushed tumultuously to the Capitol and performed the customary sacrifices, not omitting to prostrate themselves before the emperor's vacant chair, and lay upon it the new year's presents, which, from the time of Augustus, the Cæsars had been wont to accept on these solemn occasions. This done, they repaired of their own accord to the senate-house, and neglecting all state affairs, consumed the day in complimentary harangues and fulsome adulation of the tyrant. On the third day they recovered somewhat of their presence of mind. The prætors constituted themselves a commission for conducting the business of the senate, and convened it in the usual form. Nevertheless such was the abject terror in which it lay, that it dared not proceed to any matters of administration till it was announced that Caius had abdicated his functions on the twelfth day, and that the consuls designate were at liberty to ascend their chairs. The first act of the senate under their presidency was to decree that the birthdays of Caius and Drusilla should be solemnized with the same honours as that of Augustus; but their countrymen excused this new baseness, by asserting that the decree was made in compliance with an expressed command.[1] The

and resigns on the twelfth day.

to the Capitol; but it is clear that the marriage and birth took place in Gaul. The confusion in Dion's chronology of this reign is very great.

[1] Dion, lix. 24.

fears of the bewildered nobles were more particularly excited at this moment by the report that their persecutor was attended in Gaul by a routine of foreign princes, such as Agrippa and Antiochus of Commagene, who, as they apprehended, were instructing him in the arts of Eastern sovereignty; and the fact of his having summoned Ptolemæus, son of Juba, king of Mauretania, to his presence, and put him to death for the sake of his riches, caused gloomy forebodings among such of the patricians at home as still retained their much coveted possessions.[1]

The conspiracy had been detected, the disloyal punished; the legions, warned by the fate of their contumacious chief, were transferred to Servius Galba, by whom discipline was enforced with pristine severity. Furloughs were withheld, the labours of the camp were redoubled, the soldiers were taught both to work and to fight, and to feel the difference between a dissolute intriguer in the prætorium and a stern warrior of the ancient stamp. When they ventured, in the relaxation of a camp-spectacle, to applaud him, he drily rebuked their unwarrantable freedom with the order to keep their hands under their cloaks.[2] The winter of 793 was occupied in preparations for a descent upon Britain, and the military season was opened by the emperor's advance from Lugdunum, or from the Rhine, to the shores of the Channel. The troops which he had assembled in Gaul are said to have been exceedingly numerous; the enterprise he had in view was nothing less than the complete reduction of the island, the submission of which had been promised him by a recent fugitive. At Gessoriacum the legions were mus-

The "British expedition" of Caius.

[1] Dion, *l. c.*; Suet. *Calig.* 26. Ptolemæus was son of Juba by Cleopatra Selene, daughter of M. Antonius. He was, therefore, the grandson, Caius the great grandson, of the triumvir.

[2] Suet. in *Galb.* 6.: "A Caio Cæsare Gætulico substitutus, postridie quam ad legiones venit, solenni forte spectaculo plaudentes inhibuit, data tessera, ut manus pœnulis continerent."

tered in great force. While awaiting the moment of embarkation, they were directed one day to take up a military position on the beach; horse and foot were drawn up in order of battle fronting the waves of the ocean, and the whole armament of catapults and other engines of war was arrayed on their flanks, or in the rear, as if for immediate engagement. Caius himself reviewed his army from a trireme at sea; then landed and placed himself on a lofty tribunal, as about to give the signal for battle. Suddenly, amidst the clang of trumpets and measured voices of the centurions, the order issued to pile arms and pick up shells, with which every man hastened to fill his helmet and laid them at the emperor's feet. Collected into a vast heap together, these *spoils of the ocean*, as Caius described them, were sent to Rome, and the senate was directed to deposit them with due solemnity among the treasures of the palace and Capitol. In token of this pretended victory, the emperor, we are told, caused a lighthouse to be erected to guide vessels by night into the harbour; and the campaign being thus auspiciously terminated, he presented the men with a largess of a hundred sesterces apiece, and, as if this liberality had exceeded all previous examples, bade them retire, *glad and rich*, from his presence.[1] The good fortune which has given us a clue to the real proceedings of Caius on the Rhine, through the mists of malicious misrepresentations, seems here wholly to desert us. Yet I hesitate to believe that the *British expedition*, as it was sarcastically denominated, was such a monstrous farce as it has been described. The erection of a lighthouse indicates at least an intelligent purpose, and cannot have been a mere whimsical fancy. Possibly Caius was diverted from a real intention of attack-

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 46.; Dion. lix. 25. Compare the references to this affair in Tacitus (*Agric.* 13., *German.* 37.): "Mox ingentes Caii Cæsaris minæ in ludibrium versæ."

ing Britain by some act of submission, from which he anticipated the opening of freer and more regular communications with the natives. Even the picking of shells may be a grotesque misrepresentation of receiving a tribute of Rutupian pearls.

Caius claims a triumph.

Nevertheless, whatever distrust we may feel of the burlesque account of this exploit transmitted to us, the claim Caius now advanced to a triumph, as for a glorious success, was no doubt utterly extravagant; nor is it incredible that the tricks with which he is said to have given colour to it, were hardly less absurd than they are described. Seven times, he declared, the army had acknowledged his victories by saluting him as Imperator. The British chief Adminius, who had solicited through his aid restoration to power, was retained, he said, as a pledge of the barbarians' submission. He had placed his foot upon the ocean, and reduced it to dependence for ever. Accordingly he issued orders to the imperial procurators to prepare a triumph on the most magnificent scale that had ever yet been attempted; but directed them at the same time not to lavish on it the treasures of the fiscus, but to extort the requisite sums from the citizens and provincials, for which purpose he gave them full authority over the property of all his subjects. Meanwhile he collected, for lack of veritable captives, a few German slaves or fugitives, or hired the tallest and bulkiest of the Gauls themselves, causing them to dye their hair red and let it grow, to acquaint themselves with the language of the tribes beyond the Rhine, and assume German appellations.[1] To make the intended

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 47.: "Coegitque non tantum rutilare et submittere comam, sed et sermonem Germanicum addiscere et nomina barbarica ferre." Compare the evident allusion to this trick, real or imputed, in Persius, vi. 45.: "Jam lutea gausapa captis, Essedaque, ingentesque locat Cæsonia Rhenos." But after all the captives of Caius were never, perhaps, exhibited in Rome at all; and we have in Tacitus a similar account of an imposture practised, as he assures us, at a

ceremony still more imposing, he directed the galleys in which he had put to sea to be impelled against the stream of the Rhine and thence drawn overland to the rivers of Gaul, and thus conveyed to Rome. The legions were wafted by this circuitous course more expeditiously, perhaps, than they could have marched by land; and Caius led them throughout in person, and visited on his way the stations on the Lower Rhine, in which his father had planted his tent, and with which his own childhood had been familiar. Possibly he conferred here with Galba on the last measures he might require to punish the designs of Gætulicus, and his harsh and violent temper may have prompted him to a more bloody inquisition than he found it, on reflection, prudent to enforce. But the report that he now remembered the mutiny of certain legions against Germanicus, and the expulsion of Agrippina from the camp, with himself an infant in her arms, and proposed in his fury to massacre, after twenty-five years' interval, the whole of the battalions which bore their name, and when dissuaded from this bloody purpose was only deterred by his fears from decimating them, is surely too extravagant for belief.[1]

Caius returns to Rome.

It has been recorded how, when Augustus was journeying simply habited among the Alps, a Gaul who had designed to attack him was restrained by the imposing majesty of his countenance.[2] Far different was the impression which

later period by Domitian (*Agric.* 39.). Possibly the habit of wearing false flaxen hair had made the citizens suspicious of the genuine.

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 48.: "Consilium iniit nefandæ atrocitatis legiones . . . contrucidandi . . . . vixque a tam præcipiti cogitatione revocatus inhiberi nullo modo potuit quin decimare vellc perseveraret. Vocatos itaque ad concionem inermes . . . . equitatu armato circumdedit. Sed quum videret suspecta re plerosque dilabi ad resumenda . . . . arma profugit concionem," &c. Notwithstanding the particularity of this account, I must reject the whole as incredible.

[2] Suet. *Oct.* 79.

the stage-divinity of Caius made on the rude minds of the provincials. One of them, beholding him on his tribunal glittering with the insignia of Jove, was seen to smile: the emperor demanded what he thought of him; *I think you a great absurdity*, was the blunt reply. Possibly the imperial mummer at the moment had been thinking the same; at all events, his sense of humour was touched, and the man, being no better than a low artificer, was allowed to escape unpunished.[1] He reserved all his anger for the nobles and senators, who, it seems, not venturing to decree him honours after their late ungracious reception, and apprehensive lest his claim to congratulation on his maritime successes might prove no more than a grim jest, had neglected to invite him to enter the city in triumph. *I am coming*, he exclaimed, *I am coming—but not for the senate—for the knights and people who alone deserve my presence among them. For the senate I will neither be a prince nor a citizen, but*, clapping his hand on his sword, *an imperator and a conqueror*. He then forbade any of the order to come forth to meet him, and waiving the offer of a triumph, which they had too long withheld, made his entry with the solemnity of an ovation only, and scattered money to the populace. His return took place on his birthday, the last day of August, in the year 793.[2]

Caius finally avows himself a tyrant and autocrat.

The last, and in the eyes of the Romans themselves the most abominable, phase of the Caian tyranny remained still to be exhibited. They had witnessed his assumption of divinity with a smile; and even the rivalry he had affected with the Jupiter of the Capitol, whose thunders he pretended to imitate, and with the tale of whose parricide and incest he had met the imputation of similar crimes

[1] Dion, lix. 26.: *καὶ ὃς ἀπεκρίνατο, ἐρῶ γὰρ αὐτὸ τὸ λεχθὲν, ὅτι μέγα παραλήρημα· καὶ οὐδὲν μέντοι δεινὸν ἔπαθε, σκυτότομος γὰρ ἦν.*
[2] Suet. *Calig.* 49.

against himself, had excited no other feeling, perhaps, but one of placid amusement.[1] The selfish cowardice with which the nobles had beheld the cruelties inflicted on so many of their own class, without raising a hand, or even a murmur, on their behalf, amazing as it seems to us at first sight, may be accounted for by the distrust of one another, with which the system of delation had generally imbued them. The people growled with indignation at the unwonted exactions imposed on them; nevertheless, they could not long resist the seductions of new shows and largesses. The style and character of the principate had been coloured indeed more and more by the arbitrary usages of Eastern monarchy; no rule or privilege could continue to hold its ground against the will of the prince, whose caprices could be enforced with the naked sword by a devoted bodyguard. But it was not till he entered Rome in the garb of an imperator, and made the forum his camp and the palace his prætorium,—it was not till he brandished the fasces in the eyes of the citizens, and subjected them to military law,—that Caius really appeared to Roman imaginations as a Pisistratus or a Tarquin. From this time the die was cast, and he finally abandoned all the decorous fictions of the republic. He avowed himself a tyrant, and continued thenceforth to wear the outward ensigns of autocracy without scruple.[2] He can hardly have been unconscious that this overt act of usurpation would raise him up more dangerous enemies than all his previous

[1] Aurel. Vict. *de Cæsar.* 4.: "Cum Jovem se ob incestum . . . . assereret." Comp. Dion, lix. 26.: *Ζεύς το εἶναι ἐπλάττετο, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ γυναιξὶν ἄλλαις τε πολλαῖς καὶ ταῖς ἀδελφαῖς μάλιστα συνεῖναι προεφασίσατο.*

[2] Aurel. Victor, *de Cæsar.* 4.: "His elatus dominum dici, atque insigne regni capiti nectere tentaverat." In the epitome the same author asserts that Caius actually wore the diadem. Suetonius, in a passage before referred to, says that he was very near assuming it, and only desisted on the assurance that he had risen above the highest eminence of kings and sovereigns. *Calig.* 22.

atrocities.[1] Another Caius had perished by the dagger, and such was the fate which he must have apprehended for himself. But the disdain he felt for the wretched people he had trampled upon, seems to have fortified his courage. When a plot against his life was discovered by the treachery of one of the conspirators, and the persons implicated in it tried to save themselves by denouncing some of his most familiar associates, such as the captain of his guards, and his favourite freedman Callistus, he went up boldly to the accused, bared his breast, and offered them a sword to take his life if they really desired it.[2] This, at least, was not the act of a coward, such as Caius is generally represented; nor, it may be added, in spite of many furious declamations against him, can we charge him with bloody severity in revenging this attempt upon his person. Cerialis, the leader of the conspiracy, though put to the question to reveal its extent, was suffered to escape with his life, to perish many years after in a similar enterprise against another master.[3]

Conspiracy against him detected.

The senate, however, seized the occasion to recover their master's favour by decreeing solemn games for his preservation, and by offering him a seat in the curia so far elevated above the floor that his person should be inaccessible to an assailant.[4] This anxiety to place him as

Crowning extravagance of the Caian principate.

[1] Josephus mentions, among the atrocities of Caius which gave the greatest offence, his allowing slaves to lay informations against their masters. *Antiq.* xix. i. 2. Another provocation was the report that he meditated transferring the seat of empire to Alexandria or Antium, his birthplace. Suet. *Calig.* 49.

[2] Zonaras, xi. 6.

[3] Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 17. The language of Seneca in his treatise on Anger (*de Ira*, 19.) strongly exemplifies the baneful passion against which he preaches. It is impossible to attach much importance to denunciations, the climax of which is that Caius allowed some of his victims to be executed at night. "Quid tam inauditum quam nocturnum supplicium? . . . quantulum fuit lucem exspectare!"

[4] Dion, lix. 26.

it were beyond their own reach may indicate that the intended attack upon him, like that upon Julius Cæsar, was to have been made in the senate-house, and that the consent of the whole body of senators was fully expected. In the face of such evidence of the general detestation in which he was held, Caius still relied on disarming his foes by inspiring them with mutual jealousy and distrust. Shrinking from combination and almost from conversation with one another, they vied in paying abject court to the tyrant, or to the vilest of his creatures. Among the foremost of these was a freedman named Protogenes, who was said to carry about with him two tablets, inscribed *the Sword* and *the Dagger*, which contained the names of the persons destined, the one to execution, perhaps, the other to assassination.[1] Whenever this noted delator entered the senate-house, the fathers crowded round to take him obsequiously by the hand. On seeing a certain Scribonius Proculus thus coming forward to greet him, *What!* he exclaimed, *durst thou salute me, enemy as thou art to Cæsar?* and at the words the senators fell upon the wretched man, and stabbed him to death with their styles.[2] Such an instance of slavish pusillanimity might reassure the emperor amidst the dangers by which he was actually environed. He indulged more freely, perhaps, than ever in the notion of his own omnipotence, and rioted in the fantastic caprices to which such a notion seemed always to prompt him. One day, at a public banquet, when the consuls were reclining by his side, he burst suddenly into a fit of laughter; and when they courteously inquired the

[1] Dion. *l. c.* Suetonius (*Calig.* c. 49.) says that these γράμματα λυγρά were discovered among the emperor's papers after his death. At the same time a chest was also found, filled with a great variety of poisons, the power and qualities of which were carefully marked, as ascertained by experiment. When they were thrown into the sea, the fishes perished far and near.

[2] Dion, *l. c.*

cause of his mirth, astounded them by coolly replying that he was thinking how by one word he could cause both their heads to roll on the floor.[1] He amused himself with similar banter even with his wife Cæsonia, for whom he seems to have had a stronger feeling than for any of his former consorts. While fondling her neck he is reported to have said, *Fair as it is, how easily I could sever it.*[2]

Conspiracy of Cassius Chærea.

But the end of this monstrous principate, not yet four years old, was already drawing nigh; and, if we may believe our accounts, the tyrant's overthrow was due not to abhorrence of his crimes or indignation at his assaults on the Roman liberties, so much as to resentment at a private affront. Among the indiscretions which seem to indicate the partial madness of the wretched Caius, was the caprice with which he turned from his known foes against his personal friends and familiars. Thus he sacrificed to a freak of ill-humour the tragedian Apelles, the companion of his pleasures, and instigator of many of his excesses. No one felt himself secure, neither the freedmen who attended on his person, nor the guards who watched over his safety. Among these last was Cassius Chærea, tribune of a prætorian cohort, whose shrill woman's voice provoked the merriment of his master, and subjected him to injurious insinuations.[3] Even when he demanded the watchword for the night the emperor would insult him with words and gestures. Chærea resolved to wipe out the affront in blood. He sought Callistus and others, the same apparently who had before been accused of conspiring against Caius, and who had lived

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 32.: "Quid nisi uno meo nutu jugulari utrumque vestrum statim posse?"

[2] Suet. *Calig.* 33.: "Tam bona cervix simul ac jussero demetetur."

[3] Suet. *Calig.* 56.; Senec. *de const. Sap.* 18.: "Chæreæ tribuno militum sermo non pro manu erat, languidus sono et infracta voce suspectior. Huic Caius signum petenti modo Veneris, modo Priapi dabat." Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xix. 1. 5.; Dion, lix. 29.

in apprehension ever since. He soothed the jealousies which Caius had sown between them, persuaded them to trust one another in their common peril, and organised with them and some of the most daring of the nobles a plot against the emperor's life. Yet this was not a conspiracy of the senate: it had no consular or prætor at its head, nor had it any ulterior project in view. There was no design of sacrificing the tyrant in the curia, and proclaiming tyranny at an end. From want of resolution the deed was postponed from day to day, and not portents only, but some treacherous whispers may have warned the emperor to *beware of Cassius!* A woman named Quintilia, the mistress of one of the conspirators, refused under torture to discover the design.[1] Caius contented himself with despatching an order for the execution of a Cassius Longinus, proconsul of Asia, who was accordingly summoned to Rome, but arrived there just too late to suffer by the tyrant's mandate.[2] At last, after many delays, the festival of the Palatine games was fixed on for carrying the project into effect. Four days did Caius preside in the theatre, surrounded by the friends and guards who were sworn to slay him, but still lacked the courage. On the fifth and last, the 24th of January 794, feeling indisposed from the evening's debauch, he hesitated at first to rise. His attendants, however, prevailed on him to return once more to the shows; and as he was passing through the vaulted passage which led from the palace to the circus, he inspected a choir of noble youths from Asia, who were engaged to perform upon the stage. He was about to call them back into the palace to rehearse their parts before him,

[1] Joseph. *Antiq. Jud. l. c.*
[2] Suet. *Calig.* 57.; Dion, lix. 29. This, however, would suppose an interval of nearly two months, which seems hardly admissible. Cassius had been the husband of Drusilla, whom he was forced to relinquish to Caius, to be united to M. Lepidus.

but the leader of the band excused himself on account of hoarseness. Caius was still engaged in conversation with them when Chærea and another tribune, Sabinus, made their way to him: the one struck him on the throat from behind with his sword, while the other was in the act of demanding the watchword. A second blow cleft the tyrant's jaw. He fell, and drawing his limbs together to save his body, still screamed, *I live! I live!* while the conspirators thronging over him, and crying, *again! again!* hacked him with thirty wounds. The bearers of his litter rushed to his assistance with their poles, while his bodyguard of Germans struck wildly at the assassins, and amongst the crowd which surrounded them killed, it was said, more than one senator who had taken no part in the affair. The conspirators extricated themselves from the narrow passages, and left the body where it fell. It was borne in secret by friendly hands to the pleasure grounds of the Lamian palace, and there hastily and imperfectly consumed, and thrust into a shallow tomb. At a later period, the sisters Livia and Agrippina, restored from banishment, exhumed it, reduced it solemnly to ashes, and consigned it again to a more decent sepulchre. Till this was done the shade, we are assured, could have no rest itself, nor would it suffer the keepers of the garden to slumber undisturbed at night.[1]

Death of Caius.

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 59. Caius was slain in his thirtieth year. His reign lasted three years, ten months, and eight days, from the 16th of March, 790, to 24th of Jan. 794.

CHAPTER XLIX.

The senate deliberates on the state of affairs.—The prætorians carry off Claudius to their camp and swear allegiance to him.—The senate yields and accepts him as emperor.—He proclaims an amnesty, excepting only Chærea and a few others.—Contempt and neglect with which he had been treated in his early years.—His devotion to literature.—He takes the policy of Augustus as his model: 1. His military exploits and conduct of foreign affairs. 2. His revision of the senate and knights, and census A. U. 800. 3. His administration of religious affairs—secular games A. U. 800. 4. His laborious administration of justice. 5. His buildings and constructions: the Aqua Claudia; the Portus Augusti; draining of the lake Fucinus. 6. His public shows in the amphitheatre, and mock sea-fight in the lake Fucinus.—Gluttony and intemperance ascribed to him.

Confusion of the assassins.

THUS, after an interval of eighty-four years, another Caius Cæsar fell by the hand of the assassin, but one who would never have been mentioned in conjunction with the first, except for the likeness of his name and of the manner of his death.[1] The parallel, however, was not confined to the first act of the tragedy: its subsequent scenes presented a repetition of nearly similar circumstances;—the same confusion among the assassins themselves, the same hasty and ill-concerted attempts at establishing the freedom they had recovered, and, lastly, a like defeat and overthrow by the strong and well-directed will of a military power. It would seem that the Romans, strong as they were in individual enterprise, and though trained by all their habits to deliberation in common, were little capable of combining to any purpose; possibly the very force of their personal characters, and the vehemence of their wills, rendered

[1] Tac. *Hist.* iii. 68.: "Repentina vis dictatorem Cæsarem oppresserat: occultæ Gaium insidiæ."

them, in the gravest crises of their history, thus unfit for united action.

When each of the conspirators had thrust his weapon into the mangled body, and the last shrieks of its agony had been silenced, they escaped with all speed from the corridor in which it lay; but they had made no dispositions for what was to follow, and were content to leave it to the consuls and senate, amazed and unprepared, to decide on the future destiny of the republic. Among the first of the emperor's friends who penetrated to the spot where he fell, was the trusty Agrippa, who threw a mantle over the body, and tried for a moment to conceal the fact of his death. But the violence of the German guards, and the sturdy bearing of a consular, Valerius Asiaticus, who proclaimed aloud that the tyrant had ceased to breathe, and how much he regretted having borne no part in the transaction himself, made it fully known, and at the same time daunted the courage of those who might have avenged it. There remained no other duty for Agrippa to perform but to carry off the remains, and while awaiting the course of events, consign them hastily to the grave. While the Germans were awed by the imposing attitude of Valerius, some cohorts of the city guards accepted the orders of the consuls, and occupied the public places under their direction. At the same time the consuls, Sentius Saturninus and Pomponius Secundus, the latter of whom had been substituted for Caius himself only a few days before, convened the senate, not in the accustomed curia, because it bore the name of Julian, but in the temple of the Capitoline Jupiter. The first act of the sitting was to issue an edict, in which the tyranny of Caius was denounced, and a remission of the most obnoxious of his taxes proclaimed, together with the promise of a donative to the soldiers. The fathers next proceeded to deliberate on the form

The consuls convene the senate for deliberation.

under which the government should be henceforth administered. On this point no settled principles prevailed. Some were ready to vote that the memory of the Cæsars should be abolished, their temples overthrown, and the free state of the Scipios and Catos restored; others contended for the continuance of monarchy in another family, and among the chiefs of the nobility more than one candidate sprang up presently to claim it. The debate lasted late into the night; and in default of any other specific arrangement, the consuls continued to act as the leaders of the commonwealth. Saturninus obtained a decree in honour of the restorers of public freedom, and especially of Cassius Chærea, the head and hand of the conspiracy. When the hero approached the curule chairs and demanded the watchword of the consuls, he was entrusted, amidst vociferous acclamations, with the sacred name of *Liberty*. The senators separated. Chærea delivered the word to the four Urban cohorts, and despatched a tribune named Lupus to execute the vengeance of the state on the wretched Cæsonia, whose reputed influence over her husband marked her as an object of particular detestation, and on her child, the monster's only offspring.[1]

The Prætorians carry off Claudius to their camp and swear allegiance to him.

But while the senate deliberated, the prætorian guards had resolved.[2] Accident presented them with an object to rally round, and a keen sense of interest combined with the consciousness of power to determine them to exert the strength which their union and discipline gave them. In the confusion which ensued on the first news of the event, several of their body had flung themselves furiously into the palace, and began to plunder its glittering chambers. None dared to offer them any opposition; the slaves and freedmen fled or concealed themselves. One of the inmates, half-

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 60.; Dion, lx. 1.; Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xix. 2.
[2] Gibbon, *Decl. and Fall*, ch. iii.

hidden behind a curtain in an obscure corner, was dragged forth with brutal violence; and great was the intruders' surprise when they recognised him as Claudius, the long despised and neglected uncle of the murdered emperor.[1] He sank at their feet almost senseless with terror: but the soldiers in their wildest mood still respected the blood of the Cæsars, and instead of slaying or maltreating the suppliant, the brother of Germanicus, they hailed him, more in jest perhaps than earnest, with the title of Imperator, and carried him off to their camp. During the night, while the senate was still debating, and the soldiers, now collected in greater numbers, were pressing the empire which he dared not yet accept, with more determination upon him, the consuls, informed of his place of retreat, sent some of the tribunes to invite him to their meeting, to deliver his opinion upon the state of affairs. To this summons he timidly replied that he was detained in the camp by force, and the clash of arms and menacing attitude of the soldiers seemed sufficiently to confirm the excuse. In the morning, when it was found that the senate had come to no conclusion, and that the people crowding about its place of meeting were urging it with loud cries to appoint a single chief, and were actually naming him as the object of their choice, Claudius found courage to suffer the prætorians to swear allegiance to him, and at the same time promised them a donative of fifteen thousand sesterces apiece.[2] At the same time Agrippa, who had quitted

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 10.: "Prórepsit ad solarium proximum, interque prætenta foribus vela se abdidit." The solarium was the terrace or portico outside the house; the windows which opened upon it were furnished with curtains. Some historians have adopted Burmann's unnecessary conjecture "scalarium," as if Claudius had hidden himself under the stairs. Dion says, *ἐν γωνίᾳ που σκοτεινῇ*; Josephus, *κατά τι προσβατὸν ὀλίγαις βαθμίσι χωρίον*. *Antiq. Jud.* xix. 3.

[2] Suet. *Claud.* 10.: "Primus Cæsarum fidem militis etiam præmio pigneratus." This fatal example we shall find regularly followed for the future.

the half-burnt bones of Caius to repair to the long-deserted associate in whose fortune he now confided, went in his interest to the senate, and exhorted it to yield with a good grace to the force which was about to be arrayed against it. While protesting that all his own wishes were on its side, he declared that there was no hope of its success in the impending struggle. *The prætorians*, he said, *besides their greater numbers, are trained and veteran soldiers; our forces are a mere handful of slaves and freedmen.*[1] He earnestly counselled it to temporize and negociate. On the other hand, he secretly urged Claudius to persist in his claims to unconditional submission, though he recommended him to speak of the august assembly in terms of respect and consideration, to flatter its vanity by affecting to consult it, and by promising to approve himself in all things a ruler of a different stamp from the tyrant who had goaded it to its futile assertion of liberty.[2]

The senate submits, and accepts Claudius as emperor.

The senators assembled once again in the temple of Jupiter[3]; but now their numbers were reduced to not more than a hundred, and even these met rather to support the pretensions of certain of their members who aspired to the empire, among whom were Valerius Asiaticus and Minucianus, the husband of Julia, than to maintain the cause of the ancient republic. But the formidable array of the prætorians, who had issued from their camp into the city, and the demonstrations of the popular will, daunted all parties in the assem-

[1] The Vigiles, or Urban cohorts, were a corps of freedmen, according to the institution of Augustus. Besides them, the senators might have armed their slaves.

[2] Suet. Dion, *ll. cc.*; Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xix. 4.

[3] Josephus says in the temple of Jupiter Νικήφορος or Victor. He may mean Jupiter Stator, whose temple below the Capitoline was not unfrequently used for its meetings by the senate, or, more probably, this is his way of expressing the temple of Jupiter in the Capitol, to whom the spoils of victory (νικητήρια) were dedicated.

bly: even the guards in which it confided, vacillated, and Chærea in vain protested, almost alone, against the substitution, as he said, of an idiot for a madman; while Sabinus sullenly declared that he would not survive the advent of another Cæsar to power. Presently the Urban cohorts passed over, with their officers and colours, to the opposite side. All was lost: the prætorians, thus reinforced, led their hero to the palace, and there he commanded the senate to attend upon him. Nothing remained but to obey and pass the decree, which had now become a formal act of investiture, by which the name and honours of Imperator were bestowed upon the new chief of the commonwealth. Such was the first creation of an emperor by the military power of the prætorians: we shall witness at no distant period the interference of a still stronger power, that of the legions themselves, in the work.[1]

Claudius proclaims an amnesty, excepting only Chærea and a few others.

Surrounded by drawn swords Claudius had found courage to face his nephew's murderers, and to vindicate his authority to the citizens, by a strong measure of retribution, in sending Chærea and Lupus, with a few others of the blood-embrued, to immediate execution; while Sabinus, omitted from the proscription, kept his word to his associates by throwing himself on his own sword. Claudius was satisfied with this act of vigour, and proceeded, with a moderation but little expected, to publish an amnesty for all the words and acts of the late interregnum.[2] Nevertheless for

[1] Aurel. Vict. *de Cæsar.* 4.: "Ita Romæ regia potestas firmata." A coin of Claudius bears on one side the legend IMPER. RECEPT. (imperatore recepto); on the other, PRÆTOR RECEPT. (prætorianis receptis). Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* vi. 235.

[2] Suet. *Claud.* 11.: "Imperio stabilito nihil antiquius duxit quam id biduum . . . memoriæ eximere." Dion, lx. 3. Orosius speaks in magniloquent language of this act of clemency, vii. 6. This Christian writer takes a peculiar view of the reign of Claudius. At its com-

thirty days he did not venture to come himself into the curia, so terrible was the impression the deed of blood had made upon him, and so conscious was he of his personal inferiority to the nobles who had aspired to the place he occupied in virtue of his name alone. When at last he recovered courage to take his seat between the consuls, he caused the prefect and tribunes of his guard to attend constantly about his person, a precaution to which Tiberius had occasionally consented, but which Caius had boldly disregarded.[1] The same apprehensions followed him from the curia to the council-room, to the hall of audience, and even to the private apartments of the palace. Before the curtains which veiled the entrance to his antechamber guards were posted to examine all who entered. Down to a late period of his principate even women and children were not exempted from the search, lest they should bear about them concealed weapons. Satellites, lance in hand, were stationed at the head and foot of his couch at the banquet, and he was even served at table by soldiers. This jealous custom he retained to the end of his reign, and it became an established etiquette of the court under his successors. Even when he visited a sick friend, for Claudius affected as far as possible the obliging manners of a patrician citizen, he caused the chamber of the invalid, and even his bedclothes, to be carefully examined.[2]

mencement, he says, the apostles Peter and Paul came to Rome, the faith was preached, and Rome was blessed in consequence with many signal advantages—a merciful emperor, a wise administration, prosperity at home and abroad. But after Claudius expelled the Jews or Christians from the city, all this was changed. Rome was harassed by famine, the emperor abandoned himself to sanguinary tyranny, and perished in the end miserably by poison.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* vi. 15.

[2] Suet. *Claud.* 35.: "Quanquam jactator civilitatis." Dion (lx. 3): of the guards in the banquet hall: *καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ἐξ ἐκείνου καταδειχθὲν καὶ δεῦρο ἀεὶ γίγνεται.* Of the personal search: *ἡ δὲ ἔρευνα ἡ διὰ πάντων διὰ Ὀυεσπασιάνου ἐπαύσατο.*

The personal fears, indeed, of the new emperor contributed with a kindly and placable disposition to make him anxious to gain his subjects' good-will by the gentleness and urbanity of his deportment.[1] Far from assuming the cold reserve of Tiberius, or the ferocious pride of his nearest predecessor, Claudius showed himself full of consideration for all who had any claims on the prince and father of the people. His proclamation of amnesty was followed by the pardon of numerous exiles and criminals, especially such as were suffering under sentence for the crime of majestas. The wretched sisters of Caius were recalled, and allowed to return to their domestic duties or dissipations.[2] Many harsh enactments of the late ruler were annulled, and compensation made wherever it was possible. Confiscated estates were relinquished. Moderation and generosity characterized the fiscal measures of the opening reign; the new-year's presents, which Caius had not only accepted but solicited,—to enable him, as he said, to bear the expense of rearing a daughter,—were waived, and even interdicted. The emperor refused the inheritance of any man who had relatives of his own; he persisted, moreover, to the last in declining the prænomen of Imperator.[3] The statues of which Caius had plundered Greece and Asia were generally sent back, and the temples he had ceased for his own cult,—as for instance, that of Apollo at Miletus, one of the finest edifices of the age,—were restored to their proper divinities. The honours which Claudius paid to the memory of his brother Germanicus

Fears and moderation of Claudius.

[1] Aurel. Victor, *de Cæsar.* 4.: "Pleraque per formidinem tamen egregie consultabat."

[2] Dion, lx. 4. Suet. (*Claud.* 12.) says that he obtained the express sanction of the senate for every such act of grace.

[3] Suet *Claud.* 12. This peculiarity is confirmed by the coins and inscriptions. See Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* vi. 247. The moderation of Claudius is specified also by Dion, lx. 5.

and his parents, as well as to Livia and to Augustus, were accepted as a pledge that he would take these illustrious examples for his model, and for their sake he was excused for not withholding respect even from Caius and Tiberius.[1] The discovery Claudius made, or pretended, of lists of intended victims, and of the fatal poison-chest, added to the horror of the citizens at the monster from whom they had escaped, and made them doubly grateful for the goodness of his successor. The popularity of the new prince, though manifested, thanks to his own discretion, by no such grotesque and impious flatteries as attended on the opening promise of Caius, was certainly not less deeply felt. When, a few months after his accession, during a temporary absence, a report was spread of his assassination, the people were violently excited; they assailed the soldiers and the senate with cries of treason and parricide, and were not appeased till the chief magistrates came forward, and solemnly protested that their favourite was safe, and returning rapidly to the city.[2]

The early life of Claudius.

The confidence indeed of the upper classes, after the bitter disappointment they had so lately suffered, was not to be so lightly won. The senate and knights might view their new ruler with indulgence, and hope for the best; but they had been too long accustomed to regard him as proscribed from power by constitutional unfitness, as imbecile in mind, and, which was perhaps in their estimation even a worse defect, as misshapen and half-developed in physical force, to anticipate from him a wise or vigorous

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 11.: "Jusjurandum neque sanctius sibi, neque crebrius . . . quam per Augustum. Aviæ Liviæ divinos honores . . . parentibus inferias publicas . . . . Ne Marcum quidem Antonium inhonoratum transmisit. Tiberio marmoreum arcum peregit." Though he abolished the Acts of Caius—those of Tiberius had been abolished before—he refused to make a festival of the day of his assassination.

[2] Suet. *Claud.* 12.

administration.[1] The neglect with which his education was treated in his early years when he was abandoned to the care of nurses, and the instructions of a coarse and senseless pedagogue, who exasperated his infirmities by ill-usage, was owing probably to the crime which a Roman parent seldom forgave, the weakness of his constitution and the distortion of his frame.[2] In another rank he would have been exposed perhaps in infancy; as the son of Drusus and Antonia he was permitted to live: but he became from the first an object of disgust to his parents, who put him generally out of their sight, and left him to grow up in the hands of hirelings without judgment or feeling. The child was born at Lugdunum, in 744, on the first of August, the auspicious day of the dedication of the altar of Augustus, and received the name of Tiberius Claudius Drusus, to which was afterwards added that of Germanicus, on the premature decease of his father. His childhood and youth were one long sickness, uncheered by parental affection; and he seems to have been deemed from the first unfit for any bodily exercises. His mother was not ashamed to call him a monster of a man, an abortion of nature: the greatest expression of contempt she could apply to any one was to call him more a fool than her son Claudius. His grandmother Livia held him in disdain, and seldom even spoke to him: her admonitions were given in short and sharp letters, or conveyed to him by the mouth of others. His sister Livilla, on once hearing that he might possibly be

He had been treated with neglect and contempt for his infirmities of mind and body.

[1] Aurel. Vict. *de Cæsar.* 4.: "Et sanè quia vecors erat mitissimus videbatur imprudentibus."

[2] Suet. *Claud.* 2.: "Etiam post tutelam receptam alieni arbitrii et sub pædagogo fuit; quem barbarum et olim superjumentarium, ex industria sibi appositum, ut se quibuscunque de causis quam sævissime coerceret." Publius, the eldest son of the first Scipio Africanus, is perhaps the only known instance of a Roman of his birth and station withheld, under the commonwealth, from public affairs by the delicacy of his constitution. Cic. *Brut.* 19.; *Off.* 33.

called hereafter to power, exclaimed loudly at the unworthy fate of the Roman people to fall under such a governor. Augustus himself, who should have known human nature better, and who might have felt sympathy with bodily infirmity, could not endure that any of his race should lack the personal qualities which befitted the highest station, and slighted the poor youth both in public and in his own family. Some fragments of the emperor's correspondence are cited, to show the little esteem in which he held him.[1] Thus he consults with Livia how the youth is to be treated, and how far it will be proper to produce him in public. He may be suffered to attend at a pontifical banquet, if he will submit to conform to the example and guidance of a cousin; but he cannot be permitted to witness the games of the circus from the conspicuous elevation of the imperial lodge. He must not be seen at the festival of the Latin Feriæ, either at Alba or in Rome. If he can follow the sacred procession up the mountain with his brother Germanicus, people will ask why he is not entrusted with municipal office, which of course is out of the question. *I wish*, says Augustus, *that the poor creature would take pains to imitate some respectable personage in bearing, gait, and gesture. . . . . You may imagine*, he adds, *how surprised I was to find something to like in his declaiming, for you know that he cannot ordinarily even speak so as to be understood.* With this strong prejudice against his grandchild, we cannot wonder that the emperor allowed him to enjoy no higher distinction than the formal dignity of the Augurate, and that in the distribution of his legacies, in which he carefully marked the degrees of his esteem, he left him no more than the trifling bequest of eight hundred sesterces.[2]

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 4.

[2] Suet. *Claud.* 4. Champagny observes (*Césars*, i. 331.): "Auguste

Withheld from active life, he devotes himself to literary labours.

The obscurity in which the young man was retained by Augustus, continued still to envelope him under the next principate. He petitioned Tiberius to be suffered to partake of the honours and burdens of the state, but the empty distinction of the consular ornaments was the utmost that was conceded to him. After this mortification he relinquished all hope of public service, and retired to his country seats, where he associated, as was reported, with none but the meanest companions. The men of his own class, indeed, were too busy in paying court to the emperor or his favourites to attend to a despised outcast: his early friend Agrippa, as we have seen, deliberately cast him off as an unprofitable acquaintance. Yet there is no evidence of his having replaced these selfish companions by less worthy associates. The charges of drunkenness, gambling, and addiction to women, all which were now heaped upon him, are probably exaggerated.[1] The extent of his literary labours, in which he rivalled the most industrious students of antiquity, seems alone to preclude the possibility of excessive habitual irregularity. Claudius, we are told, composed a history of Roman affairs from the battle of Actium in no less than forty-one books; to this he added a biography of himself, or memoir of his own times, in eight, a history of the Etruscans in twenty, and of the Carthaginians in eight also.[2] Besides these ponderous historical works, he composed a

ne l'aimait pas; il n'en fit jamais qu'un Augure: il le trouvait trop imbecile pour faire autre chose que deviner l'avenir."

[1] Suet. Claud. 5.: "Super veterem segnitiæ notam, ebrietatis quoque et aleæ infamiam subiit." Comp. c. 33. Tac. *Ann.* xii. 49.: "Quum privatus olim conversatione scurrarum iners otium oblectaret."

[2] The first of these works he began originally from the death of Cæsar, but was admonished by his mother and Livia, that the theme was ill suited to his position. Of his own life he wrote "magis inepte quam ineleganter," which seems to mean that the style was better than the subject.

defence of Cicero against the criticisms of Asinius Gallus, a comedy in the Greek language, and a treatise on the art of dice-playing.[1] It may be suspected, indeed, that a great part of the labour of these various compositions was shared by the grammarians and learned freedmen with whom the literary Roman generally surrounded himself[2]; but whatever allowance we make for their assistance, it will still appear that he possessed a power of application quite inconsistent with the weakness of intellect which his maligners so freely imputed to him. Nevertheless these respectable occupations gained him no consideration. Tiberius treated him to the last with a contumely and injustice which seems to have revolted the citizens. Caius, out of deference to the general sentiment, elevated him to the consulship, and allowed him to appear at the spectacles in the place which befitted him, where he sometimes represented the absent emperor himself; but in private he was still subjected to the grossest indignities, and the emperor's boon companions were encouraged to make sport of his reputed imbecility. Thus, for instance, if he came at any time late to the imperial supper table, the guests would spread themselves on the couches and keep him standing; if he fell asleep after eating, they would put rough gloves on his hands, to enjoy

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 41, 42. The Etruscan and Carthaginian histories were written in Greek: I suspect from this that Claudius's historical works were mostly compilations, or even transcripts. The Latin language probably afforded him no originals on these foreign subjects. Claudius had also some grammatical fancies. He wished to introduce three new letters into the Roman alphabet, the digamma, the psi, and another which is not known. See Lipsius's note on Tac. *Ann.* xi. 14. The Ⅎ and ψ may still be traced on some monuments of this reign, but they did not survive it.

[2] Suetonius (*l. c.*) mentions a Sulpicius Flavus as assisting, and the great historian Livy as encouraging, him in his historical labours. In the same way we read of Ateius Philologus making historical collections for the use of Sallust and Asinius Pollio. Suet. *de illustr. Gramm.* 10.

his confusion when he rubbed his eyes on waking.[1] Such were the consequences at Rome and in the palace of being born of a weakly constitution, and of having suffered from paralysis, of halting on one leg, of trembling in hand and head, and of having perhaps the speech affected with thick and imperfect utterance.[2] Even the good nature which the poor man exhibited under these trials of his temper was turned into ridicule, and denounced as a sign of the weakness of his understanding. That the judgment of one from whom the practical knowledge of men and things had been withheld was not equal to his learning, and that the infirmities of his body affected his powers of decision, his presence of mind, and steadfastness of purpose, may easily be imagined: nevertheless, it may be allowed that in a private station, and anywhere but at Rome, Claudius would have passed muster as a respectable, and not perhaps an useless, member of society.

Claudius affects to imitate the policy of Augustus.

The opinion which is here given of this prince's character may possibly be influenced in some degree by the study of his countenance in the numerous busts still existing, which represent it as one of the most interesting of the whole imperial series. If his figure, as we are told, was tall, and when sitting appeared not ungraceful, his face, at least in repose, was eminently handsome. But it is impossible not to remark in it an expression of pain and anxiety which forcibly arrests our sympathy. It is the face of an honest and well-meaning man, who feels himself unequal to the

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 8. Comp. the satirical *ludus de morte Claudii*, or *Apocolocyntosis* of Seneca (in fin.): Apparuit subito C. Cæsar, et petere illum in servitutem cœpit: producit testes qui illum viderant ab illo flagris, ferulis, colaphis vapulantem."

[2] Suet. *Claud.* 30.; Dion, lx. 2.; Juvenal, vi. 620.: "Tremulum caput . . . . manantia labra." Senec. *Apocol.*: "Bonæ staturæ, bene canum . . . . assiduo caput movere, dextrum pedem trahere . . . . respondisse nescio quid perturbato sono et voce confusa."

task imposed upon him. There is the look of perplexity in which he may have pored over the mysteries of Etruscan lore, carried to the throne of the world, and engaged in the deepest problems of finance and citizenship. There is the expression of fatigue both of mind and body, which speaks of midnight watches over books, varied with midnight carouses at the imperial table, and the fierce caresses of rival mistresses. There is the glance of fear, not of open enemies, but of pretended friends; the reminiscence of wanton blows, and the anticipation of the deadly potion. Above all, there is the anxious glance of dependence, which seems to cast about for a model to imitate, for ministers to shape a policy, and for satellites to execute it. The model Claudius found was the policy of the venerated Augustus; but his ministers were the most profligate of women, and the most selfish of emancipated slaves. This imitation of the measures of the great founder of the empire is indeed the key to the public policy of the Claudian principate. Both at home and abroad we shall find the new ruler following the lines already traced by his illustrious ancestor; and our examination of his career of sovereignty will place in the strongest light the points of difference between the middle of the eighth century of Rome and its termination.

I. Military enterprises of the reign of Claudius.

I. The commencement of the new reign was marked by the renewed activity of the armies on the frontiers. Servius Galba, confirmed in his command on the Rhine, led his forces across that river into the territory of the Chatti, whom he had found some pretext for visiting with the terror of the Roman arms. Corbulo gained some successes over the Chauci, constructed roads and canals for the further prosecution of his enterprises, and was preparing to accomplish the long-intermitted task of German subjugation, when com-

manded to desist from so large and perilous an undertaking.[1] At the same time, at the southern extremity of the empire, the majesty of Rome was vindicated against the Maurusians, a people of the still unsettled province of Mauretania.[2] Suetonius Paullinus was the first of the Romans that crossed the range of the Atlas. Penetrating a ten days' march southward, he reached a river which was called the Gir, one of the streams perhaps which fall from the southern slopes of those mountains, and are lost in the sands of the Sahara.[3] But Claudius determined to carry into effect the plan which Augustus had prematurely announced, of an invasion and thorough reduction of the great island of Britain. As his ancestor had proposed to follow in person the steps of Julius Cæsar, so Claudius was not content to leave this important achievement in the hands of his lieutenants, but, untrained as he was to arms, he quitted the cares of administration in the capital, and joined his legions on the further side of the Channel.[4] The particulars of this deliberate aggression will deserve to be fully related in another place: it is enough here to say that it was completely successful; and though little resistance was offered, and Claudius himself found no enemy to confront him in the field, it was of sufficient importance to merit the distinction of a triumph, which the emperor claimed, and led with great pomp and ceremony in the year 797. Claudius proved

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 18, 20. Our authorities do not distinguish between this and the Corbulo who has been mentioned under the reign of Tiberius. I have there shown that they were certainly different persons. Of this Corbulo more will be said on a later occasion.

[2] Dion, lx. 9.

[3] Plin. *Hist. Nat.* v. 1. This river seems to have been confounded with the Niger, of which the ancients had some vague reports. The size, direction, and periodical swelling of the Niger suggested the idea of its connexion with the Nile, which was not quite extinct in recent times. "Et Gir notissimus amnis Æthiopum, simili mentitus gurgite Nilum." Claudian, *de laud. Stil.* i. 252.

[4] Suet. *Claud.* 17.; Dion, lx. 19. foll.

himself not unworthy of the honour, which of all Roman conquerors Sulla and Augustus had alone usurped before him, of extending the limits of the pomœrium, in token that the frontiers of the empire had been advanced under his auspices.[1]

Foundation of colonies.

The foundation of colonies had been one of the great public merits of Augustus. It had gratified the soldiers; it had given independence to many needy citizens; it had proved his personal disinterestedness, in the relinquishment of tracts of tributary domain, and the abandonment of some sources of the imperial revenue. On the other hand, the parsimony of Tiberius had been manifested in his abstaining from these popular benefactions. No colony of Tiberius is mentioned; none of his careless and grasping successor Caius. But Claudius was distinguished among the Roman imperators by his politic munificence in this particular. It was his ambition to lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes of the empire;—he restored some impoverished foundations in Italy, and established new colonies in the frontier provinces. The famous cities of Treves, Cologne and Colchester owe their origin, among others, to his hand, and their celebrity partly perhaps to the wisdom with which he chose their sites, and the bounty with which he endowed them.[2]

His conduct in regard to foreign affairs.

From his place between the consuls in the senate-house, Claudius, as the chief of the Roman people, dispensed crowns to subject potentates with imperial munificence. The suppliants who

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 23.: "Pomœrium auxit Cæsar, more prisco, quo iis qui protulere imperium, etiam terminos urbis propagare datur. Nec tamen duces Romani, quanquam magnis nationibus subactis, usurpaverent nisi L. Sulla et D. Augustus." Aurel. Victor. *de Cæsar.* 4.: "Retenti fines seu dati imperio Romano." Spanheim traces on the medals of Claudius that he received the title of Imperator no less than twenty-seven times. Spanh. *de usu Num.* ii. 404. Augustus had received it only twenty-one times. Tac. *Ann.* i. 9.

[2] See A. Zumpt, "de coloniis Romanorum militaribus." *Comm. Epigr.* i. 385.

had thronged the court of Tiberius and Caius were relieved from their painful attendance, and sent to play the tyrant in their turn at home. Antiochus, long a petitioner in the antechamber of the senate, was now restored to the throne of Commagene; and Mithridates, who claimed descent from the great Eastern hero, received a grant of the kingdom of the Bosphorus, for which Polemo, its recent occupant, was indemnified with a district of Cilicia.[1] The services of Herod Agrippa, who had managed so adroitly to aid in securing the empire for Claudius, received a brilliant and complete reward, not only in the confirmation of his authority in Galilee, but in the addition to his dominions of Samaria and Judea. By the cession of this wealthy province the kingdom of the Great Herod was once more reunited, and constituted far the most important of all the vassal sovereignties of the empire. At the same time the little district of Chalcis in Syria was erected into a principality for a younger brother of Agrippa. The Jews, though they had welcomed the transfer of their country from Antipas and Herodias to the less capricious jurisdiction of a Roman proconsul, accepted this new arrangement with marked satisfaction. Agrippa was personally popular with them, and the memory of the first Herod, tyrant as he was, was still held in admiration by the great body of the people. But besides this, the emperor had accompanied his new dispositions with decrees, in which the impious encroachments of Caius on their national privileges were formally disavowed, the malice of their oppugners in the great Eastern cities restrained, and the free enjoyment of their religious usages specifically confirmed. The return of Agrippa to Palestine and his entry into Jerusalem was a national triumph. He studied to retain the approbation of his subjects by

[1] Dion, lx. 8.

acts of munificence, and flattered their pride by his show of independence. But when he ventured on the royal act of extending and strengthening the fortifications of his capital, he was sternly reminded of the realities of his position by the interdict of the proconsul of Syria, and compelled to desist. Nor could the circumstances of his own kingdom suffer him to forget that his subjects were divided into two rival parties, whose claims he was required constantly to compromise, and whom he could hardly hope, with all his craft, to combine into a nation of common and united sentiments. While the Jewish element, bent fanatically on the maintenance of its ancient customs, and jealous of every transgression of its cherished principles, expected him to conform strictly to its religious rites, to court its priesthood, and offer sacrifice in its temples, the Pagans and Hellenizers, hardly less numerous or powerful, elevated him above all laws and usages, and pressed on him with impetuous zeal the attributes of divinity. At Jerusalem Agrippa enacted the Jew with solemn gait and tragic countenance, amidst general acclamation; but at Cæsarea he allowed the more genial part of the Greek to be imposed on him. It was at a festival in this Hellenic capital, after an harangue he had addressed to the populace, that they shouted, *It is the voice of a god not of a man.* His mirth was turned into sadness. He was smitten at the same instant with a sore disease, and died after a few days' illness, at the premature age of fifty-four.[1] This unexpected catastrophe seems to have unhinged the plans of the Roman government. So important a charge as the sovereignty of Palestine could be intrusted only to a tried servant of the emperor; and even Agrippa had given cause of jealousy by the relations he had cultivated with the princes on his frontier. None of

Death of Herod Agrippa.

[1] Josephus, *Antiq. Jud.* xix. 8.; *Act. Apost.* xii., A.U. 797, A.D. 44.

his family merited to succeed him. His brother Herod was allowed to continue in the obscure dignity of his petty chiefdom, and his son Agrippa, already resident as a hostage in Rome, was retained there in honourable custody; while the dominions of the great Idumean reverted once more to the control of the proconsul of Syria, and acquiesced, with a few uneasy murmurs, in its full incorporation with the empire.

II. Claudius maintains the dignity of the senate.

II. From the day that the first Cæsar fell beneath the daggers of a senatorial faction, it had become a tradition of the state to regard the senate as the natural counterpoise to the emperor, and as a rival whom it was necessary for him to amuse with flatteries, or control by force. The mutual jealousy of these two co-ordinate authorities, long kept in check by the discretion of Augustus, had been exasperated by a sense of mutual wrong under Tiberius, and had broken out in furious violence under his overbearing successor. But Claudius, on his accession, freely acknowledged that the overthrow of Caius by a just retribution had convinced him of the folly of all hostile demonstrations, and he solemnly proclaimed his intention of constituting the senate the friend and confidant of his own administration.[1]

After the example of Augustus, he revises the list of the order.

It was a fundamental principle of the Roman municipal polity that the citizen should contribute in his person, the subject in his means, to the service of the state. The great problem of statesmen was to make these two obligations balance one another; to compensate the commonwealth for the immunity from taxation of a portion of its children by laying on them the most onerous and important employments. The members of the senate were made responsible for the discharge

[1] Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* ii. 11. 2.

of the highest magistracies; but in order that these offices should be adequately filled by men of fortune equal to their expense, and of consideration suitable to their dignity, it was necessary to maintain this functionary reservoir constantly at the same exalted level, to prevent it sinking from the poverty or meanness of its individual members too low to furnish the required supply. Hence the expediency of the frequent revisions of the list of the senate, such as, under the republic, had been executed by the censors at rapidly recurring intervals, and had been repeated more than once by Augustus. But the last of these solemn inquisitions, on which the eyes of the citizens had always turned with intense and even superstitious interest, had taken place as far back as the year 757.[1] Tiberius had shrunk from the labour or the odium of renewing them. Caius had wantonly neglected to do so. It was left for Claudius, whose mind teemed with antique prepossessions, and who was appalled by no drudgery, to follow the example of the founder of the empire, and consolidate afresh the basis of the civil administration. The fierce independence of the fathers had been tamed by indolence or fear, and we hear no more on this occasion of the resentment of the expelled members, or the murmurs of the body in general. Claudius demanded of them a true statement of their means, and insisted on their possessing the requisite qualification; nor can we suppose that he neglected the show at least of inquiring into their manner of life, and visiting with condemnation such as appeared unworthy to stand at the head of Roman society. But he was mild and temperate in the exercise of his authority. Having no political factions to court or intimidate, he had no need to expose

[1] Dion, lv. 13. This seems to have been the last extraordinary Lectio Senatus; but probably the censure of the year 767, just before Augustus's death, did not pass without some special cases of removal.

himself to the charge of political partiality; and he showed himself liberal in supplying the needs of noble but impoverished families. Nevertheless, this revision thinned the benches of the curia, and showed the citizens but too plainly that the progress of affairs, even since the time of Cæsar and Augustus, had concentrated wealth in few hands, and swept many illustrious houses into obscurity. To remedy this evil, to obliterate the traces of this social revolution, Claudius proposed to call up to the senate the wealthiest of the knights and even of lower ranks.[1] Nor did he confine his views within the limits of Italy. The senate had already received accessions from Spain, Africa, the Narbonensis, and other provinces. The Jus Honorum, or claim of admission to the senate and the magistracies, which were filled from the senate or served themselves to replenish it, had been formerly conceded to the citizens of many foreign communities, by Cæsar, Pompeius, and Augustus. The principle thus acknowledged awaited further extension, on fitting occasions, from every new ruler; and Claudius had both precedent and expediency in his favour when he decreed its application to the whole of Gallia Comata, or at least, as the first step in the process, to the Ædui, the first Gallic ally of Rome, the friends and brothers, as they had been styled, of the Roman people. This preference of the Gauls over other subjects was justified by their tried fidelity during the period which had elapsed since their conquest. It was tendered as a boon at the close of their first century of submission. But it was really owing to the favour with which the emperor regarded their country as his own birthplace, and still more, perhaps, to the intimate relations his father and brother had held with it during their long administration

He supplies vacancies from the wealthiest families in the provinces.

He opens the career of honours to the Gauls.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 25.; Dion, lx. 29.

there. The measure was received indeed with some murmurs of discontent: undoubtedly it deserved to be explained more luculently, both as to its motives and anticipated results, than in the rambling and inconclusive arguments actually used by its propounder, as we may judge from the fragment of the speech in which he recommended it, preserved on a brazen tablet which was discovered three centuries ago at Lyons.[1] But its advantages required in fact no imperial expositor. On the one hand, the attraction of provincial notabilities to Rome might be regarded as a security for the faithful service of the connexions they left behind; on the other, the wants and interests of the province might thus be brought directly to the knowledge of the imperial city itself: in short, it was a step towards the fusion of the two great elements of society at the time, an advance in the development of political unity, and as such it assisted in the genial task of riveting the sympathies of the world together. At a later period another happy consequence appeared, in the effect produced on the higher classes at Rome by the simpler tastes of these representatives of provincial manners. The senseless extravagance of the children of the conquerors, and their vile imitation of the Greeks and Orientals, were shamed by the decent self-respect of the yet uncorrupted barbarians.[2]

[1] See the contents of the "Tabulæ æreæ duæ Lugduni erutæ ad latus S. Sebastiani, A. 1529, quæ Claudii Imp. orationem continent super civitate Gallis danda," in an excursion of Lipsius to Tac. *Ann.* xi. 23. They have been published with a commentary by Zell in Germany, according to Hoeck's references: but I have not seen the tract myself. It is curious to compare this genuine transcript of the emperor's words with the paraphrase, if such it may be called, of Tacitus (*Ann.* xi. 24.); which is important, as showing what degree of authenticity may be claimed for the speeches and conversations he attributes to his characters.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* iii. 55.: "Novi homines e municipiis et coloniis atque etiam provinciis in Senatum crebro assumpti domesticam parcimoniam intulerunt."

The order thus revised and rendered worthy of its imperial functions was required to apply with assiduity to its duties, and fresh penalties were assigned to indolence and absence.

Claudius revises the list of the knights.

The senate evinced its renewed activity under this reign by the promulgation of a great variety of laws. The second or equestrian order was subjected to a similar inquisition, and refreshed once more with the infusion of baser blood.[1] Notwithstanding the creation of new patrician houses by Augustus, this caste, to which some of the most solemn religious functions appertained, continued to dwindle away, and required additional grafts.[2] The effects of luxury, of vice and celibacy, had proved more fatal than the sword of the executioner. But all these causes combined to decimate the ancient families; and we observe, more and more, the rise of new names into distinction, and lose sight in the same proportion of old and cherished appellatives.[3] In order to carry out these reforms, Claudius assumed the censorship in 800, and held a lustrum.[4] Augustus, as we have seen, when he performed this solemnity, had abstained from adopting the title of Censor. Whatever his motive for this innovation may have been, his

Censorship Claudius. A. U. 800.

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 16.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 25.: "Paucis jam reliquis familiarum quas Romulus majorum et L. Brutus minorum gentium appellaverant; exhaustis etiam quas dictator Cæsar lege Cassia et princeps Augustus lege Sænia sublegere."

[3] The barbarism of the double gentile name seems to appear first about this period, as in the grammarian Remmius Fannius Palæmon, originally a slave. We meet with the same in Nævius Sertorius, and also in Milonia Cæsonia. This usage may owe its origin to adoption, the name of both the original and the adoptive gens being now often retained in conjunction. From this time the double appellative occurs very frequently. At first the names so conjoined were generally obscure ones; at a later period we shall be startled by a Julius Calpurnius, an Ælius Aurelius, a Claudius Rutilius, a Flavius Valerius Aurelius, &c.

[4] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 13, 25.; Suet. *Claud.* 16.; Dion, lx. 29.; Plin. *Hist. Nat.* x. 2.

successor was more punctilious in preserving the name, together with the functions of the office. The enumeration of the citizens on this occasion gave a result of 5,984,072 males of military age, which may imply a total Roman population of not less than 25,419,066.[1] Thirty-four years before the return amounted to only 4,897,000, or a total of about 17,400,000; and this considerable difference is not to be accounted for by the mere increase of population in the course of a single generation. While, however, it may be taken as evidence, in some degree, of the general prosperity which is for the most part indicated by a rapid increase of births over deaths, we must consider it also as a result of the fresh introductions into the class of citizens which were in progress under Tiberius and Caius. This increase was still more developed under the next principate. It is probable that Claudius conferred the boon on many communities as well as individuals; and it is not impossible that both he and Caius made a traffic of it for their private advantage. Such, at all events, was undoubtedly the case with his ministers and favourites, many of whom amassed enormous fortunes by procuring the franchise from their master for wealthy applicants. The Roman citizen was still exempt from the most onerous requisitions of the state, the poll and land tax; and the twentieth on successions was lightened to him when the property descended in a direct line.[2] The sale of the franchise by the emperor was in fact no other than the spendthrift's economy; it was living upon the capital of the state. The fatal extravagance of the system was first perceived at a somewhat later period, and we

[1] See Tacitus (*l. c.*) compared with the somewhat different statement of Eusebius. For the proportion of males between 17 and 60 to the sum of a population, see Clinton, *Fast. Hell.* iii. 457, 461. Hoeck, *Röm. Gesch.* i. 2. 286.

[2] See Dion, lv. 25., and Gierig's explanation of Plin. *Paneg.* 39.

shall see some checks put on the claim to immunity by succeeding emperors.

III. Nor did the example of Augustus fail to remind his curious imitator that the care of the national religion is among the first duties of the conservative reformer. Claudius promptly acquiesced in the general disgust with which the impieties of Caius had been regarded. The assumption of the special attributes of divinity, the club of Hercules, and the thyrsus of Bacchus, and the caricature of the national deities, which had disgraced the last reign, found no favour or indulgence from him. The Orientalism which had pervaded the court and sanctuary under the disciple of Agrippa, was swept sternly away by the historian of Etruria. In other matters the measures of Claudius, as chief of the state religion, seem to have been generally practical and useful. He limited the number of holidays, which were become a serious impediment to business; but as regarded the foreign cults which had so often intruded into the city, and been so often banished from it, he contented himself with proscribing such only as seemed politically dangerous. The Jews, who had been expelled by Tiberius, but who seem to have lately recovered their position there through the influence of Agrippa, were treated with indulgence, till the disturbances they excited by seditions or domestic dissensions caused them to be chased once more from the city.[1] The spirit of the antiquarian was again visible in the treaty Claudius contracted with Agrippa by the sacrifice of a swine in the forum; in his restoration of the expiatory offerings of Servius in the grove of Diana; and in his proposing to appoint a senatorial commission to examine the conduct and efficiency of the Haruspicinal

III. Measures for the conservation of the national religion.

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 25.: "Judæos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit." On this celebrated passage more will be said hereafter.

discipline.[1] The chief pontiff celebrated the completion of the eighth century with the ceremony of secular games. But in this his vanity seems to have prevailed over his literary prepossessions, for he could not but have been aware that the Etruscan Sæculum bore no reference to a period of a hundred years; nor, in fact, had more than sixty-three years elapsed since Augustus had summoned the Romans to behold a solemnity *which none then living had before seen, and none should ever see again.*[2]

IV. Patience of Claudius in the administration of justice.

IV. Among other merits which history has ascribed to Augustus was the sedulous industry with which, after the manner of the old patricians, he had occupied himself with dispensing justice to the citizens. The patient application of his laborious follower was eminently conspicuous in this practice also. Sometimes in the open forum, sometimes in the neighbouring basilicas, Claudius, old and infirm as he was, would endure from hour to hour, every day of business, the drudgery of judicial investigations, and give at least decent attention to the clamorous appeals of the advocates, who, emboldened by his unexampled patience and good nature, would venture not unfrequently to worry and even insult him. So little did he spare himself in this irksome duty, that his measure for curtailing the numerous non-days of the calendar was ascribed to a wish to gain more time for the labours of the tribunals.[3] When, after a long morning sitting, he arose at last for refreshment,—even if, as on

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 15.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 11.; Plin. *Hist. Nat.* vii. 48. The secular games of Augustus were A. U. 737; those of Claudius A. U. 800. "Quare vox præconis irrisa est, invitantis more solemni ad ludos, quos nec spectasset quisquam, nec spectaturus esset: quum superessent adhuc qui spectaverant, et histrionum, producti olim, tunc quoque producerentur." Suet. *Claud.* 21.; Plin. *l. c.*

[3] Suet. *Claud.* 14, 15.; Dion, lx. 4. 17. Comp. the satirical *Apocolocyntosis:* "Si memoria repetis, ego eram qui tibi ante templum tuum jus dicebam totis diebus mense Julio et Augusto."

one occasion, the odour of a pontifical banquet, prepared in the adjoining temple, served to hasten his movements, — the petitioners for a hearing would sometimes obstruct his passage and cling about his person, till he meekly resumed his seat, and devoted the afternoon also to their affairs.[1] However this passion for judicial functions might be open to caricature, and however his intellectual infirmities might betray themselves in occasional haste, frivolity, or indecision, the conduct of Claudius seems to have been actuated by a sincerely beneficent intention, and shows beyond dispute the principles of moderation and equity which distinguished him. A man can hardly be naturally a tyrant who takes pleasure in meting out justice, and deciding questions of right. It was with real satisfaction therefore, we may believe, that Claudius suppressed the laws of majesty, and forbade the practice of delation; that he relinquished the most grievous exactions of his predecessor; that he promised never to subject a Roman citizen to torture; that he declined to raise the festivals of his house to the dignity of national solemnities. When he repressed the encroachments of the freedmen, and caused false pretenders to the franchise to be capitally punished, and again when he withdrew the liberty which Caius had allowed to slaves of giving evidence against their masters, he consulted principles of Roman law to which the citizens attached considerable importance. It was not in the interests of humanity, but of a jealous and inquisitorial policy, that such indulgences had been granted, and it gave occasion to intolerable licence. The justice indeed of Claudius was little tempered with mercy. Under his reign more parricides, it was said, were adjudged to the ancient punishment of the sack than in all the ages that had elapsed before it.[2] Nevertheless, one

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 15, 33.
[2] Suet. *Claud.* 34.; Senec. *de Clem.* i. 23.

of his enactments at least remains to show that his views with respect to the servile population were milder and more enlightened than those of previous legislators. He ordained that the sick slaves exposed in the temple of Æsculapius should, if they recovered, obtain their freedom; but the masters who ridded themselves of their obligations to the old and infirm by actually putting them to death, as may have been sometimes done, he declared guilty of murder. We may hope that this the only recorded instance of his consideration for that degraded caste was in fact but a single specimen of a more extensive legislation.[1]

V. Material constructions of Claudius.

V. In the construction of enormous works of magnificence or utility the Romans beheld the most flattering reflection of their own greatness. The undertakings of Claudius were not unworthy of this colossal age of material creations; yet they were not the mere fantastic conceptions of turgid pride and unlimited power. The aqueduct begun, as we have seen, by Caius, was completed after several years' labour, by his successor, from whom it derived the name of Claudian, by which it was thenceforth distinguished. This channel secured for the city the purest and most abundant of all its supplies of water, and enriched the populace with the cheapest and most useful of its luxuries. The charges which have been made against Caius, of withdrawing first the vessels, and afterwards the carts and waggons of Italy from their ordinary employment in conveying food to the population, and of leaving Rome at his death with no more than a week's consumption of grain in store, though involving probably considerable misrepresentation, seem, nevertheless, to have been grounded on the scarcity which actually broke out more than once, and lasted for several years, during the government of his successor. It must be considered

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 25.: "Quod si quis necare mallet quem quam exponere, cædis crimine teneri." Comp. Dion, lx. 13, 29.

among the difficulties with which the feeble old man had to contend, and it may serve to enhance our idea of the merits of his laborious administration, that he received from the selfish tyrant before him the legacy of empty granaries, as well as an exhausted treasury.[1] It is not impossible that the senate's ready acquiescence in the choice of the prætorians was determined by the prospect of a famine in the city, a popular riot, and a servile insurrection; and the republicans of the day may well have consented to waive their speculative principles in favour of an emperor, at a moment when the tribes and centuries of antiquity would have demanded the creation of a dictator. It has been seen that the Alexandrian corn ships came to anchor at Puteoli, more than a hundred miles from the place of their cargo's destination. Such was the want of harbours or secure roadsteads along the strand of Làtium, that it was only the smaller coasting vessels of Gaul or Spain that could venture to run to land at any nearer point. The mouth of the Tiber had become nearly choked up by the accumulation of sand, and the few vessels that now sought the quays of Ostia were generally obliged to ride at anchor in the offing. The engineers despaired of clearing and keeping open a passage in the main stream of the river; but they now, under the direction of Claudius, resorted to the plan of cutting a new channel from the right bank, a little above the deserted harbour, and constructing an artificial haven, with the aid of two moles advanced into the sea. The entrance was illuminated by a light-house; and from henceforth, as long as science and industry survived in the capital of the world, the vessels which supplied it with its first necessary could come by day or by night to a safe and convenient anchorage, and transfer their freight to the barges, to be propelled

[1] Aurel. Victor, *de Cæsar.* 4.; Senec. *de Brev. Vit.* 18.; C. Cæsar "decedebat . . . . septem aut octo dierum cibaria superesse."

against the descending current by the labour of men or horses.[1] To this haven was given the name of Portus Romanus or Portus Augusti, to distinguish it from the now neglected establishment of Ostia. Claudius himself deserves the entire credit of this bold and salutary undertaking; for he persisted in it notwithstanding the remonstrances of his timid engineers, and the great outlay it required. Its importance was speedily shown; for in the eleventh year of his reign the empire was visited by a scarcity, which seems to have followed on the failure of the crops throughout the provinces, and redoubled exertions were required to save the capital from famine. Rome was in an uproar; the multitude surrounded the emperor in the forum, and assailed him with the most violent gestures.[2] The precautions of Augustus on similar occasions, with the expulsion of foreigners from the city, were again resorted to. The importation of grain into Rome required more method and attention than had hitherto been given to it; and the completion of a harbour to which corn could be brought at all seasons, was wisely followed by a measure to encourage the construction of ships of greater size than had usually been employed in the trade.

The Portus Romanus, or new harbour at Ostia.

Another undertaking, though its object was merely of local utility, deserves to be recorded for its magnitude. The Marsians had represented to Augustus the disasters to which their country was liable from the swelling of the waters of the Fucinus, a basin among their mountains in the heart of Italy, nearly thirty miles in circumference,

The emissary of the lake Fucinus.

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 20.; Dion, lx. 11.; Plin. *Hist. Nat.* ix. 5., xvi. 76. § 2. An immense vessel, which Caius had constructed to convey an obelisk from Alexandria to Rome, was sunk to form the foundation of the mole.

[2] Four famines are specially mentioned as occurring in this reign: —1. at Rome in the first and second year; 2. in Judea in the fourth; 3. in Greece in the ninth; 4. at Rome in the eleventh. Brotier on Tac. *Ann.* xii. 43. Comp. Suet. *Claud.* 18.; Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xx. 2. 5.; *Act. Apost.* xi. 28.

which receives the drainage of several valleys, but has no apparent natural outlet. Among the limestone hills which encircle it there are probably subterranean clefts through which, as in other regions of similar formation, a portion of its waters drains away; but they are not capable of expansion with the increase of volume within, and in seasons unusually wet the lake overflowed the lips of its crater, submerging a great extent of valuable land. The tunnel by which the superfluous waters of the Alban lake, a much smaller reservoir, are still carried off was a work of the early republic. But this emissary is little more than a mile in length, while the perforation required for the Fucinus, which Augustus shrank from undertaking, was not less than three. Claudius however was not deterred by difficulties which labour and money could surmount. He did not, perhaps, stop to calculate with accuracy the real utility of the work. He commanded it to be done, and his command was executed; but it occupied thirty thousand men for eleven years, an amount of labour which no doubt might have been more profitably employed in many other ways. Unlike the Alban tunnel, which has continued to discharge its waters without intermission for two and twenty centuries, the emissary of the Fucinus fell speedily into decay, and required to be repaired and restored to efficiency by a later emperor. It has now been completely choked up for many hundreds of years, and the meadows on the shelving bank of the lake are still subject, as in ancient times, to the caprices of the seasons.[1]

VI. Measures for the amusement of the populace may properly be mentioned next after such as were intended for its well being; for in the view of the Roman administrator the two were of co-ordinate and almost equal necessity.

VI. Measures for the amusement of the citizens.

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 20.; Dion, lx. 11.

If, on the one hand, he provided the people with cheap corn, on the other, that they might have no reasonable pretext for discontent, he was careful to furnish them with the unfailing excitement of magnificent public exhibitions. Accordingly, if Claudius executed immense works of engineering, for supplying the metropolis with water, for securing the access of her richly-freighted flotillas, or for averting a periodical inundation, not less was he required to watch with simulated interest the long-protracted combats of men and beasts, in which the multitude expected their ruler to share their own barbarous satisfaction. We have already admired the patience with which Augustus submitted to this tax on his time and temper. Tiberius, we have seen, could not school his stubborn mind to a similar sacrifice. Caius shared the vulgar taste for brutal excitement, and in this instance, at least, could court popularity while he gratified his own appetite. Claudius, patient and plodding by nature, regarded this condescension as a legitimate portion of the routine to which he had devoted himself; and he sate through the weary hours of popular amusement without interest, it may be believed, but, at the same time, without disgust. His constitutional insensibility did not even require the rest and diversion of mind which were commonly demanded even by the mass of the populace. In the shows of the amphitheatre, after the morning exhibitions, there was an interval allowed for rest or refreshment, during which the spectators retired for the most part from the spot, to resume their places at a later hour. Claudius, it was observed, rarely availed himself of this respite. His bodily infirmities perhaps made him averse from change and motion, and he was content to retain his seat in the imperial tribune, and witness the interludes of rope-dancing and jugglers' feats, which formed a languid entertainment in the intervals of bloodshed.

The gladiatorial shows.

It is said, indeed, that he was not satisfied with these innocent recreations, and sometimes called for a fresh supply of gladiators to fill the hours of suspense.[1] If, at least, the spectators made the demand, he would comply with it with his usual apathy. The general taste for these spectacles was increasing, and under Claudius it certainly received no check. He suffered himself indeed to be made the tool of the popular humour here as elsewhere, condescending to bandy coarse jokes with the multitude, and degrading the majesty of empire to the level of vulgar buffoonery; nor can we resist the testimony of our authorities to his brutal indifference to human suffering, and his morbid curiosity in scrutinizing, and as it were analysing it in his victims.[2]

Augustus had exhibited a mock sea-fight in the basin he constructed on the bank of the Tiber, and Claudius directed a show of siege operations, and the storming of a city, in the meadows of the Campus Martius; but we do not read that on either of these occasions the illusion was carried to the extent of actual bloodshed. It was very different, however, with the extraordinary spectacle which Claudius, towards the close of his reign, paraded on the Fucine lake, to celebrate the completion of his work there, and the first admission of its water into the tunnel he had constructed. He summoned the population of Rome and Italy to witness from the surrounding hills the manœuvres of two fleets of triremes and quadriremes, manned by armies of gladiators, while vessels filled with soldiers were posted on the shores to prevent desertion, and cut off retreat. One authority estimates the opposing armaments at twelve vessels each, another at fifty;

Grand spectacle of a sea-fight on the lake Fucinus.

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 34.; Dion, lx. 13.

[2] Suet. *l. c.*: "Sævum et sanguinarium natura fuisse, magnis minimisque apparuit rebus. Tormenta quæstionum . . . . exigebat coram . . . . jugulari jubebat ut exspirantium facies videret."

while Tacitus, whose numbers are not generally excessive, declares that the combatants engaged were as many as nineteen thousand, and that the whole circuit of the lake was lined with the flotilla which guarded them; an exaggeration manifestly of the most flagrant kind. Refinements of luxury formed a horrid combination with the atrocity of the spectacle. Claudius, armed and cloaked as an imperator, with his consort in a military mantle by his side, seated himself on a throne overlooking the waters, attended by senators, knights, and soldiers. The combatants, who were styled Sicilians and Rhodians, defiled before him, and saluted him; and when he graciously returned their greeting, it was understood as an intimation that the contest was not intended to be mortal.[1] When the vessels were drawn up in array, the figure of a Triton in silver was made to emerge suddenly from the lake, and sound the signal for engagement. They went through the manœuvres of a sham fight, advancing and retreating, striking and rebounding from each other; but the emperor, we are told, was not satisfied with this peaceful display, and ordered the attack to commence in earnest. Dion assures us that, when the men hesitated to destroy one another, he caused his own flotilla to charge, and cut them in pieces. Suetonius, more soberly, only suggests that he thought of doing so; but Tacitus here at least is more moderate than either of his compeers, and announces that, *after many wounds*, the combatants were separated and dismissed. Such remarkable discrepancies in the relation of a matter of such patent notoriety may put us on our guard against many astounding anecdotes of their times with which these authors perplex and provoke us.[2]

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 21.: "Ave imperator, morituri te salutant."

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 56.; Suet. *Claud.* 21.; Dion, lx. 33. It seems to have been in connexion with this exhibition that Claudius gave a banquet at the head of the emissary, at which the sudden rush of the

Personal intemperance attributed to Claudius.

In reading of the shattered health and frame of the prince who was raised unwillingly to the throne from his desk, at a period far beyond the middle of life, untrained for government, and with no natural bent towards affairs, we cannot but admire the force of the Roman character, which appears to have borne this feeble creature through labours which might task the highest powers and the happiest disposition. Yet this incessant strain of mind and body seems to have been favourable to his health, which recovered its tone under the labours of the principate. The wear and tear of a life so trying required no doubt the support of stimulants; the excess in eating and drinking to which Claudius is said to have been addicted, and which has made his name notorious for gluttony, was at first perhaps no more than indulgence of the craving which his exhausted powers naturally excited. Encouraged by the artifice of the wives and parasites who ruled him, he lapsed more and more into gross intemperance, and the pains of indigestion, from which he suffered so acutely as to meditate, it was said, escaping from them by suicide, were caused, we may believe, by this habitual abuse.[1] His jaded appetite was excited by the splendour of his banquets and the numbers of the company: his viands were often spread in ample halls or pleasure-grounds, and his couches crowded by many hundreds of guests. On such occasions he gratified his senses to the utmost, and seldom rose from table till he had gorged to repletion, and required to relieve his stomach by vomiting. In judging of the character of the poor old man, whose private failings have been elevated into notoriety, some allowance must be made for the coarseness of the times, and the ordinary licence of his associates. Nor must we forget how readily

water into the tunnel before the proper moment was very near causing a frightful catastrophe. Tacitus, c. 57.; Suet. c. 32.

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 31.

the scandalous anecdotes of the day were accepted by annalists and biographers as veritable history. With regard to women, the intemperance of which he is accused may be almost confined to the ease with which he passed from the caresses of one lawful wife to those of a successor: of all the Cæsars Claudius stands, on the whole, the most nearly free from the charge of illicit and disgraceful indulgences.[1] But now for the first time at Rome the story of the prince's wives becomes the history of the principate: the city of Scipio and Augustus recedes for a moment from our view, and we seem to stray, as in a wayward dream, through the saloons of Versailles or Aranjuez.

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 33. Two of his female favourites are named by Tacitus (*Ann.* xi. 30.), and Dion has a passing remark on his intemperance with regard both to wine and women. But the particulars of his alleged excesses, from which his gluttony has become so generally infamous, are confined to the scandalous chronicle of his biographer.

CHAPTER L.

Claudius subject to the influence, 1. Of women: his wives: Messalina. 2. Of freedmen: Polybius, Narcissus, &c.—Treatment of the sisters of Caius.—Banishment of Seneca.—Death of Appius Silanus.—Conspiracy of Scribonianus.—Invasion of Britain and triumph of Claudius.—Death of Valerius Asiaticus.—Internal administration of Claudius.—Rivalry of Messalina and Agrippina.—Messalina's amour with Silius, and daring marriage with him.—Alarm and anger of Claudius.—Her disgrace and death.—Intrigues for a successor.—Claudius marries Agrippina.—Her son Domitius betrothed to his daughter Octavia: adopted under the name of Nero.—Influence of Agrippina: she founds the Colonia Agrippinensis.—Advancing popularity of Nero.—Agrippina effects the destruction of Lepida.—She poisons Claudius.—Nero succeeds to power.—Remarks on the character of Claudius.—The adoration paid him during his life by Seneca, and abuse of him after his death.—The Apocolocyntosis.—Flattery of Nero. (A.U. 794—807, A.D. 41—54.)

Claudius subjected to the influence of women.

The ruler to whom the conduct of affairs was now entrusted had been bred, beyond the usual term of infancy, by the women of the imperial household; for the weakness of his sickly frame still required the care of female nursing at an age when the young Roman was ordinarily transferred to his tutors and the masters of his athletic exercises. To the last he continued to feel the need of the petty attentions and ministrations of the gentler sex. In early adolescence his guardians proposed to provide for his domestic comfort by espousing him to consorts of their own selection; but of those who were successively chosen for the honour two were lost to him before marriage; the one being rejected on account of the offence her parents had given to Augustus, the other dying untowardly on the day

appointed for the nuptials.[1] Claudius was at last united to Plautia Urgulanilla, who, to judge from the names she thus combined, was the daughter perhaps of Plautius Silvanus, a distinguished commander in Pannonia, whose tragic story has been related under the principate of Tiberius, and was descended from Urgulania, the proudest of the friends of Livia.[2] By this noble bride Claudius became the father of two children: the first of them was the Drusus, to whom the daughter of Sejanus was affianced almost at his birth, and who died in infancy; the second was a girl, and received the name of Claudia. But when her mother was detected intriguing with a freedman of the household, and repudiated by her husband, Claudius disowned the infant, and shocked the Romans by causing it, at the age of five months, to be ruthlessly abandoned.[3] By Ælia Petina, the daughter perhaps of Ælius Tubero, to whom he next united himself, he had one child only, whom he called after his mother Antonia, and who became affianced to Cnæus Pompeius Magnus, the son of a Crassus, who thus, by a strange favour of fortune, combined a descent from two triumvirs, with an alliance with the families of three others.[4] The union with Petina lasted probably some years; and it was in the reign of Caius, as we may suppose, that Claudius divorced himself from her on some trifling disagreement. A third

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 26. The first was Æmilia Lepida, the great granddaughter of Augustus, being the child of his granddaughter Julia by L. Paullus, and sister of M. Æmilius Lepidus, the friend and victim of Caius Caligula; the second, Livia Medullina, of the family of the Camilli.

[2] For Plautius Silvanus, see Tac. *Ann.* iv. 22.; Vell. ii. 112.; Dion, lv. 34. He was the grandson of Urgulania, the friend of Livia.

[3] Suet. *Claud.* 27. It seems not unlikely that this horrid act was perpetrated in imitation of Augustus, who forbade the infant of the younger Julia to be nourished. But to cast away a child which had once been *taken up*, was an abuse of the paternal authority from which the feelings of the Romans revolted.

[4] For Ælius Tubero, see Tac. *Ann.* xii. 1.

marriage with Valeria Messalina speedily followed: the two children she bore him came into the world towards the commencement of his principate.[1] The shamelessness of the women of the higher ranks has been noticed on former occasions: the precariousness of the position they held in marriage seems to have made them despair of acquiring, or at least of long retaining, domestic influence; and they too often abandoned themselves to indulgences, from which they had no motives either of affection or prudence to withhold them. Of all the Roman matrons, however, Messalina has acquired the most infamous celebrity; her name has been used even to our own times as the greatest byword of reproach to her sex; the satirist has striven in vain to inflame the glowing colours which the historian has flashed upon her crimes. As the wife of a man whom she probably despised, it would seem absurd to suppose that she put any unusual check on the wanton passions of her class; yet we may see reason hereafter to question, at least to their full extent, the enormities for which she has been so signally notorious.

Messalina was the daughter of Valerius Messala Barbatus, sometimes called also Messalinus, who stood in the relation of cousin to Claudius by marriage; for his wife, Domitia Lepida, was a granddaughter, while Claudius was himself the grandson, of the triumvir Antonius. This Lepida seems to have been herself dissolute as well

Character and influence of Messalina.

[1] The son, who received a few years after his birth the surname of Britannicus, had completed, according to Tacitus, his fourteenth year in 808 (*Ann.* xiii. 15), and was therefore born A.U. 794: if, however, he was only two years younger than Nero (see *Ann.* xii. 25.), he must have been born as early as 792 or 793. Suetonius also contradicts himself in saying that the child was born on the 20th day after his father's accession (*i.e.* in Feb. 794), and in his second consulship; for this did not commence till 795. I take the middle of these dates, viz. Feb. 794. It does not appear whether the daughter, called Octavia, was older or younger than her brother.

as ambitious, and such were the qualities which descended from her to her child.[1] Nevertheless Messalina, at the time when she consented to attach herself to the fortunes of Claudius, could have had no prospect of a throne. However little she may have regarded her husband, she clung no doubt to the position she had acquired with him, all the more vehemently as it was strange and unexpected, and her most earnest efforts, her vices and her crimes, would be directed, we may suppose, to securing it. Whatever may have been the irregularity of her conduct, it was doubtless her wish to disguise it from him, and she succeeded in keeping him convinced, at least to the last moment, of her entire devotedness. But his character was too weak to allow her to put entire trust in his convictions; he was, in fact, constantly swayed by the influence of one or another of those about him; the whisper of a friend or courtier might blast her dearest schemes, and her intrigues were directed to securing in her interest the persons by whom he was most closely surrounded. For this purpose, we are assured, she amassed money and she lavished favours. She joined with the ministers of the court in selling appointments to the wealthiest applicants, in extorting bribes by threats and prosecutions, in procuring the confiscation of the estates of nobles, and persuading the emperor to bestow them on herself: thus enriched, she sought to bind her accomplices to her side by dividing her plunder with them, and entangling them in her fascinating caresses. Perilous as such a guilty commerce was, she carried it on with boldness and success, and continued during

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 64. Domitia Lepida was sister to Cn. Domitius, the husband, as will be afterwards recorded, of Agrippina minor, and father of the Emperor Nero. She was daughter to L. Domitius by Antonia *major*, according to Suetonius,—*minor*, according to Tacitus, less correctly,—and, therefore, granddaughter of the triumvir Antonius and Octavia. Comp. Tac. *Ann.* iv. 44.; Suet. *Ner.* 5.

several years to enjoy the full confidence of her husband, while she closed the lips both of her paramours and victims. But the connexion in which she may thus have placed herself with the freedmen of the palace, the real ministers of the court and instruments of the imperial pleasure, has proved fatal at least to her reputation with posterity. Whatever were her vices and domestic treasons, they might have been overlooked perhaps by historians, who were generally content to rebuke the petulance and ambition of women with a contemptuous sneer;[1] but no infamy could be too atrocious to charge upon the matron who was guilty of a criminal association with a Polybius or Narcissus, the vile Grecian ministers of a Roman imperator, the men who sounded a lower depth even in the depths of delation, by sacrificing the best blood of Quirinus to the cupidity of branded and base-born foreigners.

The regimen of the freedmen.

The regimen of women who trafficked in offices of state, an enormity hitherto unknown in Rome, might have been regarded as the last degradation of the commonwealth, had it not been followed by the still more degrading regimen of freedmen. Next to his women it was by his freedmen that Claudius, we are told, was governed. The facility of enfranchisement has been already mentioned. We have seen how the slaves of a noble household were of two very different classes; of which the lower consisted of mere menial drudges, the rude boors of Thrace, Africa, or Cappadocia; while the upper, principally from Greece and Syria, comprised the polished instruments of fastidious luxury, exqui-

[1] It was Valerius Messala, or Messalinus, the father of the empress, who had resisted, in the time of Tiberius, the proposition that the wives of provincial governors should be forbidden to accompany their husbands abroad. He had used the proud old Roman argument: "Viri in eo culpam si fœmina modum excedat." This man and Aurelius Cotta Messalinus seem to have both been sons of Messala Corvinus. See Ruperti on Tacitus, *Ann.* ii. 32.

sitely trained and educated, and accustomed, by every compliance, however abject, to ingratiate themselves with their sensual and pampered masters. While the former class had little hope perhaps of improving their condition, or escaping, if not prematurely worn out by toil, a neglected and even an abandoned old age, the latter might calculate on securing their freedom early, after which they enjoyed a thousand opportunities of rendering themselves as necessary to their patron as they had previously been to their master. The intercourse of the Roman noble with his fellow-citizens had been always stiff and ceremonious: the many privileges they had in common gave even the plebeian a claim to formal respect from his patrician neighbour; and it was rarely that the ties of confidence and easy friendship subsisted between men so nearly equal in consideration, so often rivals, and always liable to become so. But the Roman magnate wearied of the unceasing round of conventionalities in which he moved, and longed for associates with whom he might unbend in real familiarity, without demeaning himself to the company of mere slaves. The fashion of employing freedmen for the service of the patrician household, and the management of domestic affairs, was first imported into Rome by the conquerors of the East, by Sulla, Lucullus, and Pompeius;—who were too proud, after enjoying the submission of kings and potentates, to recognise the equality of their fellow-citizens. Cæsar, indeed, with his usual magnanimity, had disdained to avail himself of this unworthy indulgence. The ascendancy he naturally exercised over all that came in contact with him, enabled him to secure the spontaneous services of men of birth and consideration hardly inferior to his own, such as Matius, Oppius, and Hirtius. Such were the stewards of his revenues, the managers of his public and private benevolences, Romans in birth

and blood, men attached to him by real friendship, but who felt that they could ply without disgrace before his acknowledged superiority. But even the inheritor of a throne had no such personal influence as nature's emperor, the first of the Cæsars. Augustus, great as he was in genius as well as in station, scarcely found such willing subservience among the citizens of his native country. Agrippa became too powerful to continue really his friend; the self-respect even of Mæcenas grew at last irksome to him. He had recourse to the venal attachment of his freedmen, whose fidelity exacted no requital, and hardly expected an acknowledgment; and of these he held many in intimacy, and cultivated their esteem. The names of Polybius and Hilarion, of Licinus, Eunus, and Celadus, occur in history or inscriptions among the trusty freedmen of the first princeps.[1] He neither required of them degrading services, nor again did he suffer them to gorge themselves with the spoils of his suitors. He enjoyed the solace of their intimacy, and when most anxious for privacy, and the ever-coveted respite from the formalities of patrician life, it was in the suburban villa of one of these humble ministers that he would disburden himself of the cares of his station.[2] Tiberius, whose strict self-discipline, at least till the later years of his retirement, was even more severe and unremitting, allowed himself no such relaxation; his freedmen were few in number, and seem to have enjoyed no portion of his confidence. The perturbed spirit of Caius was agitated by restless furies which never suffered him to seek repose, or court the charms of simplicity for a moment. During the fitful fever of his brief grasp of power, he never threw off the public man and the sovereign; he never sought the shade, or cast upon another the cares and toils of his awful

[1] Suet. *Oct.* 67, 101., with notes of Baumgarten-Crusius.
[2] Suet. *Oct.* 72.

preeminence. None ever possessed more than a momentary influence over him. But the fashion of keeping freedmen always in attendance on the Roman noble had become, from the prevailing indolence of the age, by this time general, and Caius had many such about his court, though he deigned to make little use of them. When, therefore, a prince succeeded to whom ministers and confidants were a necessity, the institution was ready to his hands. The various services, partly official, partly menial, which monarchs in modern times have been allowed by the spirit of feudalism to exact from their noble vassals, were discharged for Claudius by these Grecian adventurers. Polybius was the director of his studies, who unrolled for him perhaps the dusty volumes of Etruscan lore, in which he pretended to instruct his countrymen. Narcissus was his secretary; Pallas was his steward. To Felix, the brother of Pallas, he gave the command of a province and an army. The eunuch Posides, whatever his special functions may have been, was among that class of his intimate attendants which the Roman borrowed from the domestic establishments of the East. Narcissus was the most confidential of his advisers; Harpocras, Myron, Amphæus, Pheronactes, and Drusillanus, are mentioned, though with no specified offices, among the friends and favourites, who shared in the cares, or amused the leisure of a patron who lacked the faculty of originating for himself either his employments or his diversions.[1] These were the men who secured the intimacy of the chief of the Roman nobility; they occupied his attention to the exclusion of senators and consulars; they suggested the measures of his administration, engaged favourable audiences for foreign potentates, directed the appointment of proconsuls and legates, controlled the

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 28.; Senec. *Apocol.* 14.; Tertull. *de Pall.* 5.

march of armies and the campaigns of imperators; these were the men who determined with Messalina who should be the victims of delation, who were the fattest for sacrifice, who the most pliant for corruption; to these every noble Roman, every wealthy foreigner, paid court by presents and flatteries; upon these Messalina bestowed her own favours, and procured for them within the walls of the palace itself the noblest women of Rome.[1] Most of these men amassed colossal fortunes; the wealth of Pallas and Narcissus became proverbial; and when Claudius was once heard to complain of the slenderness of his own imperial revenues, it was replied that he would be rich enough if his two wealthy freedmen would deign to take him into partnership.[2] Both the one and the other of these favourites were honoured by the senate with the insignia of high magistracies, though it was impossible to admit them to such offices themselves, and they were loaded, moreover, with enormous grants of public money.[3] As long as the good understanding between the empress and the freedmen was maintained by mutual compliances, the emperor remained the infatuated victim of their heinous conspiracy. He continued to be deluded for years with the notion that he was governing Rome with the energy of an ancient consul or dictator, but his operations, contrived and guided by their hands, were little more than the mere shadows of sovereignty: if he made the laws, the administration of them, in which alone the real government consisted, was still

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 24.; Dion, lx. 2, 17, 18.

[2] Suet. *Claud.* 28.: "Abundaturum si a duobus libertis in consortium reciperetur." Of Narcissus Dion says (lx 34.), *μυριάδας πλείους μυρίων εἶχε, καὶ προσεῖχον αὐτῷ πόλεις καὶ βασιλεῖς.* Of Pallas Tacitus (*Ann.* xii. 53.): "Pallanti centies quadragies sestertium censuit consul designatus." Juvenal, i. 108.: "Ego possideo plus Pallante et Licinis."

[3] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 38., xii. 53. Pliny (*Epp.* vii. 29., viii. 6.) mentions the senatusconsultum, and the monument erected to Pallas with an inscription.

subjected to their control, and was exercised from East to West by their creatures. Claudius, under the influence of his wives and children, enacted not their prince but their minister.[1]

Such at least is the conclusion to which the testimony of all our authorities would lead us. Nevertheless, if the evil influences of the Claudian court were so paramount as they are described, it must be deemed strange that its public policy was so well directed, and on the whole so nobly executed, as we have seen it to have been, and that the scandals of the reign of Messalina and the freedmen are confined for the most part to the interior of the palace. It will be seen, as we proceed, that the worst enormities of the government of Claudius refer to affairs on which we are quite unable to speak with certainty; while the merits of his principate, whatever estimate we may form of them, relate precisely to the matters which are most patent to the judgment of history. To return, however, to the narrative before us. Even in the first year of the new reign, while the public conduct of the emperor, both at home and abroad, was earning merited applause, the imperial family was torn with jealousies, and harassed by intrigues.

Recall of the sisters of Caius, and second banishment of Julia.

Among the first acts of Claudius was the recall from banishment of the sisters of Caius: but Messalina, it is said, was jealous of Julia's fascinations, and, irritated at the secret interviews she was reported to enjoy with her uncle, succeeded in driving her once more into exile for her reputed irregularities. Her punishment was shared by the philosopher Seneca, who was alleged to have criminally intrigued with her. He was confined, by a decree of the senate, to the rude and unhealthy island of Corsica.[2] Here

Banishment of Seneca.

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 29.: "His uxoribusque deditus, non principem sed ministrum egit."

[2] Dion. lx. 8.; Senec. *Consol. ad Polyb.* 30, 32. Claudius, says Seneca, "me dejecit quidem, sed impulsum a fortuna et cadentem

he was detained for some years, apparently till the fall of Messalina herself; yet it is at least remarkable, that his voice, which has uttered some of the fiercest denunciations of the crimes and vices of the emperor, should be totally silent on the enormities of the empress. It has already been noticed that Caius had intended to put the great Stoic moralist to death for no other reason than the reputation of his wealth, and at a later period we again read of him as one of the richest men of his time. It would seem, therefore, that on this occasion he was not deprived of his estates; and if Messalina was really the promoter of his exile, the prosecution cannot be imputed to the cupidity so generally ascribed to her. Of the wretched Julia we hear no more but that the malice of her persecutors was not yet satisfied, and that she was not suffered long to survive her second disgrace.[1]

The year 795 was marked, according to the same authorities, by a crime of still deeper atrocity, ascribed to the same baneful influence. The shamelessness of the empress and the weakness of the man she governed, were frightfully exemplified in the death of Appius Silanus.[2] This nobleman, the head at this period of the great Junian house, was connected with the Æmilii, the Cassii, and with the Cæsars themselves: Claudius proposed to draw still closer the bonds of alliance between their families, and strengthen thereby the bulwarks of his own imperial throne.[3] With this view he recalled him from

Death of Appius Silanus.

sustinuit, et in præceps euntem leniter divinæ manus usus moderatione deposuit." An enemy of Seneca denounces him at a later period as "domus Germanici adulterum." Tac. *Ann* xiii. 42.

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 29; Dion, lx. 8, 18.

[2] Dion (lx. 14.) calls him erroneously Caius Appius Silanus: his prænomen was Appius, and his nomen Junius.

[3] Appius Silanus was married first to Æmilia Lepida, the great granddaughter of Augustus, through the two Julias. By her he had two sons, Marcus and Lucius, and a daughter Junia Calvina. Le-

the command of a province in Spain, united him in marriage with the mother of the empress, and affianced his son to his own daughter Octavia, then a tender infant. But, from whatever cause, Messalina, it seems, conceived an implacable enmity against him: it was surmised that she had cast on him amorous glances which he had not deigned to return; at all events, she resolved on his destruction, and concerted with Narcissus an extraordinary plan for its accomplishment. Early one morning the favourite, for Narcissus at this moment stood foremost in his patron's graces, burst suddenly into his apartment, with affected alarm, and related that he had dreamt that night that the emperor had been murdered by Silanus. Messalina, the partner of the imperial chamber, thereupon declared that, strange to relate, the very same vision had occurred also to herself. Claudius was horrified and bewildered. At the next moment Silanus presented himself, according to a previous appointment; but in his consternation the appointment had slipped altogether from the emperor's memory, and he beheld in his unseasonable intrusion, a proof of his meditated crime. The confederates seized their advantage: they hastily extorted from their dupe an order for their victim's arrest and immediate execution; and the next day Claudius recounted the occurrence to the senate, and publicly thanked the faithful servant who, even in his sleep, had watched over his patron's safety.[1] In this or similar ways, we are assured, died many others also, who seemed to stand in the way of Messalina and her accomplice. Whenever they wanted to rid

pidus the triumvir and Cassius the tribune were among the connexions of this family. Caius Caligula had married Claudia or Claudilla, daughter of a M. Silanus, consul in 772. See the Genealogical Tables at the end of this chapter.

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 37.; Dion, *l. c.* Tacitus alludes to this murder. *Ann.* xi. 29.

themselves of an enemy, nothing was easier than to excite the dotard's apprehensions and procure a sentence of death, disgrace, or banishment. In his moments of terror he was ready to subscribe his name to any order of cruelty or injustice: as soon as the paroxysm had subsided, he would forget all that had passed, and was known to inquire sometimes the next day for the persons he had so recently consigned to the executioner, and to wonder at their absence from his table. When reminded of the cause of their non-appearance, he was visibly surprised and mortified.[1] It seems probable that this imputation of extraordinary weakness and obliviousness is merely a perversion of some actual instances of absence of mind, not unpardonable, perhaps, in one so painfully occupied with cares and manifold occupations; but we have seen enough of the earnestness and general good sense of Claudius to question the truth of charges which would ascribe to him, while yet in the full activity of his faculties, whatever they may have been, the infatuation of second childishness.

Conspiracy of Vinicianus and Scribonianus.

Meanwhile the spirit of resistance to the imperial tyranny which had so long slumbered in the breasts of a trampled aristocracy, but had at last awakened under the insane despotism of Caius, continued to pervade the ranks of the senate and knights. The blow struck by Chærea had been, as we have seen, almost accidental; it was unconnected, at least, with any general conspiracy; and the sudden resolve of the prætorians found the chiefs of the state unprepared and vacillating. But since the opportunity for acting had passed away, many plans of action had been discussed and concerted. The ease with which the tyrant had been overthrown astonished the men who had so long shrunk from the attempt. The obtrusion of a weak,

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 39.; Dion, *l. c.*

but not the less dangerous despot upon them, though at first sullenly acquiesced in, was all the more deeply resented. A common sympathy drew together many of the nobles to overthrow the existing government and replace it by a better system, or at least by a better man. Their eyes were cast upon Annius Vinicianus, as apparently the fittest of their class to reconstruct the authority of the senate. But the fruitless act of the gallant tribune had warned them that it was not enough merely to strike down the occupant of the throne; it was necessary to secure the support of a legionary force, strong enough to control the prætorians, and protect the cradle of new-born liberty. Of the special claims of Vinicianus to the post assigned him we have no account; from his name we may conjecture that he was a Vinicius, allied to the reigning family, and adopted into the ancient house of the Annii. Among the conspirators was Furius Camillus Scribonianus, proconsul of Dalmatia; and this man, endeared perhaps to the troops he commanded by the late successes of a Camillus in Africa, if not by the recollection of his ancestor's exploits against the Gauls, offered to bring a military force to support the contemplated movement. Intoxicated with the confidence of success, he hurled defiance at the emperor from his camp beyond the Adriatic, and summoned him scornfully to descend from his throne and hide his head in obscurity. Claudius, we are assured, was smitten with consternation. He took the warning of the rebel legate into serious consideration, and actually debated with his courtiers on the necessity of submission.[1] But the vaunts of Camillus, as it soon appeared, were empty and ineffectual. When he disclosed his intentions to the soldiers, and invited them to follow him into Italy, in the name of the ancient republic, he found them altogether

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 13. 35.; Dion, lx. 15. Tacitus alludes to the event which he had narrated in one of his lost books, in *Ann.* xii. 52.

indifferent, or rather hostile to a cry they scarcely comprehended. When they turned their swords against him he had no resource but in speedy flight to an island off the coast; and even there he seems to have been speedily surprised and killed by one of his angry officers.[1] The legions which had behaved with such unexpected fidelity were loaded with caresses by the emperor. The Seventh and Eleventh received from the Senate the appellations of Claudian, Pious, and Faithful. The discovery of the plot was followed by a bloody proscription. The guiltiest or the most conspicuous, and among them Vinicianus himself, were subjected to judicial sentence; others escaped condemnation by suicide. Claudius in his terror forgot his regulations regarding the testimony of slaves, and invited denunciations without scruple from every quarter: yet it is recorded that he generally spared the families of the culprits, and remitted in their favour the confiscation of the forfeited estates. Among the sufferers was one only of the rank of prætor; and he was required to abdicate his office, before the emperor would subject him to the punishment of the sword. Narcissus and Polybius, supported by Messalina, bore the principal odium of this inquisition; those who suffered, and those who escaped, were supposed to owe their fortune respectively to the demands advanced by court-favourites for their condemnation or acquittal, and these, in either case, sought only their personal emolument. The famous and affecting story of Arria and Pætus is connected with this proscription, and may serve to impress it on our recollection.[2]

[1] Tacitus (*Hist.* ii. 75.) mentions this deed, the name of the soldier, and the fact of his receiving high promotion in consequence. It is curious that a circumstance, apparently so notorious, should have been unknown to Dion, who says that Camillus threw himself on his own sword.

[2] Suet., Dion, *ll. cc.* The story of Arria and Pætus is told at length by the younger Pliny, *Epist.* iii. 16. Comp. Martial, i 14.

Strange inconsistency in the accounts of the conduct of Claudius.

The discovery of this formidable combination against his life and power might easily render the shy and suspicious emperor a mere puppet henceforth in the hands of his advisers.[1] Then commenced, we might suppose, in earnest the reign of Messalina and the freedmen: thenceforth the pretended ruler of the state might be expected to withdraw more and more from public observation, and every affair of government to be transacted by the agency of his confidential instruments. The man who had deliberated on retiring from power at the first challenge of an audacious rival, who again after the suppression of the revolt, essayed, as we are assured, to abdicate, but was prevented by influence behind the throne, could scarcely recover courage to wield the sceptre of the world from the height of the Palatium.[2] Accordingly, we may picture to ourselves the corruption which would now pervade every department of public affairs, subject as they were to the control of a degraded and venal crew, and veiled by their contrivance from the scrutiny of the nominal ruler. We may imagine the wiles of the depraved and wanton Messalina; how she steeped the senses of her consort in brutal indulgences; how she pandered to his grossest appetites, while she gratified her own amorous caprices or satiated her cupidity unobserved. All this, indeed, and more stands recorded on the page of what is designated as the history of Rome; and it is only here and there that a corner of the veil is raised, and

[1] There is an obscure reference to a second attempt against Claudius by Asinius Gallus, son of the Gallus whom Tiberius had put to death, and Statilius Corvinus, the one the grandson of Pollio, the other of Messala, in Suetonius, *Claud.* 13. and Dion, lx. 27. The conspiracy was abortive, and its authors seem to have been treated with contemptuous lenity. Of Gallus Dion says, *σμικρότατος καὶ δυσειδέστατος ὢν, κἀκ τούτου καταφρονηθεὶς, γέλωτα μᾶλλον ἢ κίνδυνον ὦφλεν.*

[2] Suet. *Claud.* 36.

we are permitted to see the unfortunate Claudius still acting as emperor of the Romans, still presiding on the tribunals, still listening with patience, if not with favour, to the pertinacious attacks on his own powerful freedmen, which the most eloquent pleader of the day did not hesitate to launch against them[1], still assisting at the deliberations of the senate, still controlling the affairs of provinces and nations, devising schemes and settling the details of colonization, thirsting for military toils in addition to his intense application to business at home, and, coward as we are assured he was, actually quitting Rome, the focus of hostile intrigue, and throwing himself, like another Augustus, into the wildest fastnesses of barbarian enemies. Such are the strange inconsistencies of the history before us, which it only remains for us to set over against one another, but which we cannot pretend to reconcile or explain.

Campaign and triumph of Claudius.

Accordingly, the year 796, the next which followed on the abortive attempt of the malcontents, witnessed the progress of Claudius with military pomp from Ostia into the heart of Britain, an expedition the particulars of which may be reserved for another chapter. Claudius was absent from the city six months. On his return he was greeted by the senate with a decree for a triumph, an honour not unmerited by his success.[2] He assumed

[1] Quintil. *Inst. Orat.* vi. 3, 81.: "Afer cum ageret contra libertum Claudii Cæsaris, et ex diverso quidam conditionis ejusdem, cujus erat litigator, exclamasset, Præterea tu semper in libertos Cæsaris dicis: Nec mehercule, inquit, quidquam proficio." This was the same Domitius Afer who had aided Sejanus in persecuting the family of Germanicus, and who had pretended to be overcome by the eloquence of Caius. Pliny and Quintilian speak of him as the greatest orator of his time, and we have seen that he was one of the supplest of courtiers. Yet he stood up against the freedmen of Claudius, and survived most of them, dying at last in prosperity and honour in the sixth year of Nero. Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 19.

[2] Suet. *Claud.* 17.; Tac. *Agric.* 13.; Dion, lx. 19. foll.; Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxxiii. 16. On his return Claudius seems to have aban-

in token of his exploits the title of Britannicus, an appellation which was communicated, moreover, to his infant son, and which has superseded in history the name of Tiberius Claudius Germanicus, by which the child had been originally designated. The triumph of Claudius was rendered remarkable by his voluntary self-abasement in climbing the steps of the Capitoline temple on his knees, an act performed, perhaps, in imitation of Julius Cæsar.[1] It was followed by solemn games, and was made the occasion of bestowing many gracious distinctions, both civil and military, on the most deserving officers of the state. If Claudius was proud of appearing to rival Augustus, not less did he pique himself on comparing his beloved Messalina to the chaste and noble Livia. To her accordingly, as to the consort of the first princeps before her, were decreed at his instance a seat of honour by her husband's side on all public occasions, and the permission to ride in the carpentum, which had formerly been forbidden to the sex by the law of Oppius, and was still generally confined to sacerdotal personages at the greatest solemnities.[2] So unworthy, however, was the chief of the Roman matrons of these honourable distinctions, that when the brass coinage of Caius was called in by the decree of the senate, she obtained the metal to cast of it statues of a dancer named Mnester, with whom she was furiously smitten.[3] Like so many others of the men on whom she fixed her

doned the Æmilian Way, and embarked on the canal by which Augustus connected the Po with the Adriatic at Ravenna. Plin. *H. N.* iii. 20.

[1] Dion, lx. 20. See vol. ii., chapter xix.

[2] Dion, *l.c.*; Suet. *Claud.* 17. Comp. *Calig.* 15. He had previously made an exception in favour of his mother Antonia. Of the use of the carpentum Tacitus says (*Ann.* xii. 42.), "Qui mos sacerdotibus et sacris antiquitus concessus."

[3] The senate, according to Dion, caused the brass coinage which bore the head of Caius to be melted down from disgust at the tyrant's memory. Dion, *l. c.*: *καὶ ἐπράχθη μὲν τοῦτο, οὐ μέντοι καὶ ἐς τὸ βέλτιον ὁ χάλκος ἐχώρησεν, ἀλλ' ἀνδρίαντας, κ. τ. λ.* I have already shown that there is reason to surmise that this coinage was debased, and am disposed to doubt the whole of Dion's story concerning it.

admiration, Mnestèr, if we may believe the historians, was moved neither by caresses nor menaces to gratify her, and was at last only driven into her embraces by the express command of the emperor himself, to whom she had ventured shamelessly to apply for it. In this and many other cases, we are told, Messalina solicited a like indulgence from her fond and facile spouse, and he without hesitation complied.[1] At other times when she wandered from the imperial couch in quest of the coarsest gratifications, she would cause one of her handmaids to take her place by the side of the besotted slumberer.[2] It seems necessary to say thus much upon the subject, disgusting as our authorities have represented it, in order to show how grossly improbable are the details of Messalina's licentiousness, and to guard the reader against too easy a belief in some astounding incidents which have yet to be related.

Messalina's progress in wickedness.

We seem, indeed, in perusing the narrative before us, to be weltering in a dream of horrors, which, nevertheless, exert over us a kind of fascination, and however we may pause at intervals to question the phantasms they present to us, forbid us to shake off our constrained assent to their reality. The destruction of Julia, which had followed shortly after her second banishment, was succeeded at no long interval by the death of her husband Vinicius. Messalina, says the historian, was apprehensive of his vengeance: Messalina, adds the historian in the same sentence, was incensed at his repudiation of her licentious advances. If such different statements are not in themselves absolutely

[1] Dion, *l. c.*: τὸ δ' αὐτὸ τοῦτο καὶ πρὸς ἄλλους συχνοὺς ἔπραττεν.

[2] Dion, lx. 18., compared with the well-known passage in the sixth satire of Juvenal. Aurelius Victor and the elder Pliny repeat also some scandalous stories which bear on their faces strong marks of a prurient invention. It will appear from her mother's age, which will be noticed by and by, that Messalina must have been married from the nursery. She can hardly have been more than eighteen at this time.

incompatible, it will be admitted at least that they are open to suspicion; and when we find that the overthrow of Vinicius was effected by no overt act, no public charge and judicial sentence, but was popularly ascribed to the occult agency of poison administered by the contrivance of the empress, a cloud of distrust must be allowed to rest on the whole story.[1] Hitherto we have been left to the inferior authority of Dion or Suetonius; but now, at last, we seem to recover the guidance of a firmer hand, and the next act of Messalina's wickedness is described in the pages of Tacitus. The great chasm in this writer's annals extends from the death of Tiberius, at the end of his sixth, to the seventh year of Claudius, in the middle of his eleventh book.[2] In this year, the 800th of the city, Valerius Asiaticus, whose high position among the nobles of Rome has already been mentioned, was one of the consuls. The connexion imputed to him with a woman named Poppæa is said to have given offence to Messalina, who coveted, moreover, the gardens of Lucullus on the Pincian hill, which he had inherited, and which he was adorning with more magnificence than ever. She induced a delator named Suilius to assail the pair with a charge of adultery, and caused Sosibius, the tutor of her child Britannicus, to suggest to the emperor at the same time how dangerous were the wealth and influence of such a man, one who was supposed to have been a chief instigator of the murder of Caius, who had extolled the act and claimed glory for it in public, whose high consideration extended from the city to the provinces, and who, it was reported, was about to betake himself to Gaul, of which he was a native, and where he had great connexions, and place himself at the head of the Germanic legions. The army was already be-

Destruction of Valerius Asiaticus.

[1] Dion, lx. 27. [2] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 1.

coming an object of jealousy to the emperor. Claudius was in a moment alarmed at the prospect of rebellion and civil war. He immediately summoned his guards, and sent Crispinus, the prefect of the prætorians, with a detachment to Baiæ, where Asiaticus was seized in his villa, thrown into chains, and hurried to the city. The consul was not allowed to defend himself before the senate: the trial, if such it may be called, was conducted in the private apartments of the emperor, in the presence of his creatures and freedmen. Charges of licentiousness and of treasonable practices were strangely mixed up together, and advanced against him by Suilius and Messalina herself, but these he treated with lofty disregard, till the imputation of disgraceful effeminacy roused the spirit of the Roman noble within him. His energetic and passionate defence had great effect upon Claudius, and even drew tears of sensibility from the empress, who slipped out of the room to conceal her emotion, whispering only to a confederate, as she passed, that the criminal, nevertheless, must not be suffered to escape.[1] Asiaticus was remanded, but Poppæa, in the meanwhile, under the terror of impending condemnation, was induced to put an end to her own life. The catastrophe was concealed from Claudius, who invited her husband some days afterwards to his table, and wondered why he had come without his wife. *I have just lost her*, he quietly replied, and sat down to supper.[2]

Egregious flatteries of L. Vitellius.

Among the prosecutors of the unfortunate Asiaticus was L. Vitellius, one of the most notorious of the class of court flatterers, in which he was the more infamous from his high birth and station. Under Tiberius he had governed Syria, and had done good service to the state and its ruler

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 2.

[2] Tac. *l. c.*: "Ad quod functam fato responderit." The husband of Poppæa was Scipio.

in requiring the king of Parthia to pay homage to the emperor's portrait on the legionary standards.[1] He was the first of the citizens who actually adored Caius as a god. On his return from his province he entered the august presence with his head covered, with measured steps and downcast eyes, as a worshipper, and finally prostrated himself at the feet of the divinity. When Caius, in his maddest mood, asked him if he had never seen him in the embrace of Luna, he adroitly replied that the Gods alone had the privilege of beholding one another.[2] From this time Vitellius reigned at Rome as the prince of flatterers. After the death of his first patron he attached himself not less sedulously to Claudius and his favourites. He sought and obtained the honour of taking off Messalina's sandals, one of which he would carry in his bosom and frequently take out and kiss with fervour. He placed golden statues of Narcissus and Pallas among the images of his own family. Envied for his success in this career of ignominy, he became the object of many scandalous imputations, and the high-minded Asiaticus complained that he should owe his ruin to the arts of so shameless a libertine. Vitellius himself pretended to lament the fall of his ancient friend; he enumerated the services of Asiaticus and his family, and when Claudius actually deliberated on acquitting him, made a merit of demanding for him the favour of being allowed to choose his mode of death. Claudius, ever swayed by the last speaker, graciously consented, and with this proviso the sentence was recorded against him. Asiaticus declined the counsel of his friends to starve himself,

[1] Suet. *Vitell.* 1, 2.; *Calig.* 14.; Dion, lix. 27.

[2] Dion, *l. c.*: *Βιτέλλιος μὲν οὖν, ἐκεῖθεν ἀρξάμενος, πάντας καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο τοὺς ἄλλους κολακείᾳ ὑπερεβάλετο.* When Claudius was performing the ceremonies of the hundredth year, Vitellius addressed him with the words "Sæpe facias," a customary greeting on occasions of ordinary sacrifice, but involving a magnificent hyperbole in the case of a Secular rite.

a course which might leave an interval for the chance of pardon; and after the lofty fashion of the ancient Romans, bathed, perfumed, and supped magnificently, and then opened his veins and let himself bleed to death. Before dying he inspected the pyre prepared for him in his own gardens, and ordered it to be removed to another spot, that an umbrageous plantation which overhung it might not be injured by the flames.[1]

Diligence of Claudius in administering the laws.

The success of this accusation seems to have incited Suilius to further delations, and the success of Suilius stimulated the cupidity of many other delators. The fondness of Claudius himself for judicial procedure, made this in fact a delicate mode of flattery. He was proud to find his own vigilance in maintaining justice responded to by zeal and activity in the accusers, and he plumed himself on not disappointing them in the promptness of his convictions, and the severity of his sentences. However well-meaning Claudius may have been, however much he may have confided in his own conscientiousness, it is but too apparent that, amidst the glitter of false rhetoric, and the noisy display of false sentiment around him, he had not the strength of will or understanding to struggle for the truth, or aim steadily at the right. If the imperial judge was laborious, it may be believed that he was not unfrequently capricious and fitful. The cause which had dragged painfully through a long morning sitting may have been interrupted occasionally by an intemperate carousal, and only resumed with feelings of weariness and disgust. After all the plodding in-

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 3.: "Tantum illi securitatis novissimæ fuit." Such is the generous patrician's sense of the glories of his family estate which "Mancipio nulli datur, omnibus usu." The suburban plantations of the Roman nobility might be now of three hundred years' growth. Propertius may describe to us how

"Nemus omne satas intendat vertice sylvas,
Urgetur quantis Caucasus arboribus." i. 14. 5.

dustry he manifested, he was accused, not perhaps without foundation, of giving sentence often with only one side heard, sometimes with neither.[1] With a master so vain and so unstable, surrounded by a crew of greedy parasites all playing on his weaknesses, the last hope of the class over whom these accusations were always impending was to mitigate, if possible, the zeal of the accusers by diminishing their temptations. An ancient law of the republic had forbidden the noble advocate to accept fee or reward for the exercise of his eloquence at the bar of justice; yet for many generations this dignified piece of legislation had been treated as a dead letter. Hortensius and Cicero, and many able pleaders, before and since, had erected fortunes on the grateful acknowledgments of their clients; and the penalty which Augustus had sanctioned for a violation of this law had probably been rarely enforced.[2] The assignment by Tiberius to the delators of a share in the spoils of their victims was an infringement of the spirit of this regulation: but the defence of the imperial majesty was supposed to override every other consideration. Now at last, after a long interval, the nobles who had failed to overthrow the new tyranny by arms, sought to repress it by an

[1] Senec. *Apocol.* 11.: "Quo non alius
Potuit citius discere causas;
Una tantum parte auditâ,
Sæpe et neutra."

The satirist is confirmed, or copied, by Suetonius in saying that Claudius put to death in the course of his reign thirty senators and above three hundred knights. The numbers may readily be suspected. We may remember the three hundred whom, according to one account, Cæsar slew after Thapsus, the three hundred killed by Antonius at Brundisium, the three hundred sacrificed by Octavius at Perusia. The slaughters ascribed to Claudius were not massacres, but judicial executions, and these rarely, perhaps, for crimes against himself. His stolid nature knew no mercy, and he consigned to death without remorse every victim of a sanguinary code and of a harsh and barbarous procedure.

[2] Dion, lix. 18.

appeal to the law of Cincius, and demanded in fact of Claudius the abolition of what his predecessors had deemed their surest safeguard. Claudius, with that strict submission to the letter of the law which seems to have been more strongly marked in him than the sense of equity or of right reason, allowed the matter to be brought into public discussion. C. Silius, a consul designate, ventured to advocate the return to the ancient principles, while the ordinary practice had an unpopular defender in the delator Suilius. Nevertheless, the senate could not shut its eyes to the injustice and impolicy of forbidding all remuneration to oratorical talent, and contented itself with restricting it to the sum of 10,000 sesterces, about eighty pounds sterling, for the advocacy of any single cause; a limitation which, had it been actually enforced, as we cannot suppose was the case, must have greatly discouraged the profession, the high consideration of which has generally been found the strongest bulwark against the authority of unscrupulous governments. It was not by such methods that the vice of delation was to be checked; nor do we find that this abortive recurrence to the principles of a simpler state of society had the slightest effect in controlling it. As far, however, as we can understand the circumstances, the conduct of Claudius seems to do him much credit.[1]

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 5—7. On the "lex Cincia," see Cic. *de Orat.* ii. 71., and Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 42., xv. 20.; Plin. *Ep.* v. 21. The "lex Cincia" seems to have embraced two particulars: 1. the prohibition of fees for advocacy; and, 2. certain restrictions upon gifts in general. With the second of these we are not here concerned: as regards the first, it is difficult to suppose there was not some distinction made between fees paid by a client for his defence, and rewards assigned by the state for the prosecution of a criminal: the latter may naturally have become a matter of jealousy to the class who found themselves so often placed as criminals at the bar; but to the other no reasonable objection could be advanced. I do not find, however, any such distinction referred to in the few passages which relate to this law.

The secular games.

The subjugation of southern Britain was celebrated in the year 800 by the ovation of Aulus Plautius, the same able and successful officer who had prepared the way for the triumph of the emperor three years before. The honour of the greater triumph could not be conferred on a lieutenant; but Claudius showed no unworthy jealousy of his exploits, the most glorious, perhaps, of any since the time of Cæsar; and after investing him with the triumphal ornaments, the laurelled crown and robe, actually walked on his left hand, while Plautius rode himself on horseback through the streets to the Capitol.[1] This was unquestionably the greatest honour imperial Rome ever bestowed on a subject; but the modesty of Plautius was equal to his merit, and he continued to enjoy the favour of his masters by giving their jealousy no umbrage. The city had now completed eight centuries of fame and fortune, according to popular computation, and though only sixty-three years had elapsed since Augustus, following the pontifical traditions, had been called on to celebrate secular games, Claudius, in his turn, was easily persuaded that the auspicious era deserved to be commemorated by a similar solemnity. Among other festivities, the *Game of Troy* was rehearsed by noble youths, and Britannicus, then in his seventh year, was introduced to the people, as a participator in the ceremony, or at least a witness of it. But another child, the son of the emperor's niece Agrippina, by her deceased husband Domitius, made a more conspicuous figure. The age of Lucius Domitius exceeded his cousin's by three years: he was beautiful in person, and he was the grandson of the still-lamented Germanicus, and on all these accounts, it was to him that the Romans looked with present favour, and of him that they formed the fairest

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 24.; Dion, lx. 30.

auguries.[1] The appearance of the two children on that day, and the different reception they encountered, might be taken by a thoughtful spectator as a presage of the fate that was reserved for them, of the premature death of the one and the guilty glories of the other.

Our history, at least in its earliest stages, has presented a succession of antagonisms between the lords of human kind, the mortal duels of a Sulla and Marius, a Cæsar and Pompeius, an Octavius and Antonius: but these deadly feuds have been confined to the harder and coarser sex; the rivalry of Octavia and Cleopatra was a contest of beauty and fascination, expressed only by lofty scorn on the one side, and by sly depreciation on the other. But we have now before us a contest of another stamp. The shows of the arena at this period were sometimes disgraced by the combats of armed Amazons; but the court of Claudius was the first to present the hideous spectacle of two women of the highest birth and rank, and closely connected by ties of blood and marriage, engaged in a desperate encounter of intrigue and perfidy, ending in the violent overthrow of the one and the rise of the other, but equally in the eternal infamy of both. Considering how little regard was generally paid to women in private, and still less in public life at Rome, nothing seems to me to mark so much the feebleness of Claudius, as the licence thus assumed by two rival princesses to convulse the world with a quarrel of the boudoir, and the power they had to stamp a character on the history of their times.

The first deadly rivalry of women at Rome.

Messalina had in vain procured the banishment of Julia, while her sister Agrippina, certainly not inferior in beauty, energy, and unprincipled ambition, was suffered to remain in

Mutual hatred of Messalina and Agrippina.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 11. It seems most probable, amidst the conflicting accounts, that Britannicus was born early in 794, and Nero in 790, December 15. Suet. *Ner.* 6. Comp. Tac. *Ann.* xii. 25.

Rome. The emperor's niece continued to occupy a place next to the empress herself in the imperial household, to divide with her the attentions of the courtiers, and even to exert her blandishments, not without effect, on the unwary good nature of her uncle. We may imagine the jealousy of the reigning favourite; the anxiety with which she would watch every movement of an aspirant whom she had injured and menaced, and from whom she had no mercy to expect, of a woman leagued with her enemies and intriguing with her friends; her fears for the affections of her husband, for the fidelity of his freedmen, for the precarious prospects of her son. Watched in turn by an able and unsparing foe, with full access to the ear of Claudius, and ever ready to abuse it, the stay of the wretched she had oppressed, the hope of the ambitious she had repelled, Messalina must have been indeed the weakest of her sex, if she really paraded the utter disregard of decorum as well as duty, which has been ascribed to her. It seems incredible that the husband should be suffered to remain ignorant of wrongs which could so easily be divulged to him, were they so gross and notorious as after her death they were declared to have always been. While Messalina lived and reigned, it might be more dangerous to slander her; but we must observe that Agrippina became both the victor and the survivor in the strife between them. Who can doubt that it was then her aim to disgust the mind of Claudius with the woman he had once admired, to disgust both him and the citizens with the child she pretended to have borne him, and thus prepare the way by unscrupulous detraction for the elevation of her own son above Britannicus? By constituting herself the narrator of the contest she made history tell the tale as she wished it to be told. She has succeeded in representing Messalina to posterity in the same hideous colours in which she had before represented

her to her contemporaries. Historians, wearied with the vain task of seeking for truth in documents of state and imperial manifestos, turned eagerly to revelations of the palace vouchsafed by an inmate of its recesses, an actress in its most private scenes: and the memoirs of Agrippina were no doubt accepted as an authority on transactions which she was most concerned in tricking with the falsest colours. An anecdotist such as Suetonius, or a professed satirist like Juvenal, would readily embrace the piquant calumnies of a triumphant intriguer: that even Tacitus yielded to the same attractions, may be fairly assumed from his referring to these very memoirs as authentic documents on another, nor a less delicate subject.[1] We have no choice, however, but to read the story in the light in which these brilliant declaimers have placed it, only bearing in mind the foul source from which it has, in all probability, descended to us, and remarking such tokens of its distortion from the truth as an attentive perusal cannot fail to suggest to us.

The freedmen conspire with Agrippina.

Nor must we overlook the circumstance that others besides Agrippina were interested in overthrowing the object of their fear, no less than of her detestation. The confederacy which had so long subsisted between the empress and the freedmen might be dissolved by mutual jealousies and intrigues. Polybius, who had reigned supreme in the imperial household, was the friend of Seneca, and as such it seems probable that he became attached to the party of Agrippina. Messalina procured at last his disgrace; and this was doubtless the last triumph she obtained over the rising influence of her

[1] Pliny, whose appetite for information was on most subjects indiscriminate, consulted the memoirs of Agrippina as veritable history. See his preface and *Hist. Nat.* vii. 6. 8.; and comp. Tac. *Ann.* iv. 54. Nor is there any difficulty in believing that a story once accredited became repeated with even additional colouring by succeeding writers.

rival. The triumph cost her dear. It alarmed and alienated from her the other minions of the palace. When they found that the guilty commerce they had so long maintained with her had ceased to secure their own lives and fortunes, they might easily be persuaded to transfer their power to the opposite side. They aided, as we shall see, in the overthrow of Messalina: it may readily be believed that they effected their success by fraud, and defended it by unscrupulous falsehood.

Amour of Messalina with Silius.

Messalina's enmity towards Agrippina and Domitius was redoubled, we are told, at perceiving the manifest disposition of the citizens in their favour; and she would have sought means of destroying her rival by suborned accusers, had she not been preoccupied at the moment by a new and strange passion, which seemed akin to fascination. She had fallen in love with Caius Silius before mentioned, who was reputed not only the handsomest, but one of the most virtuous of the nobles.[1] She had insisted on his divorcing his wife, in order to obtain entire possession of him. Silius was either unconscious at first how deadly her caresses were, or possibly he conceived that to reject her advances would be certain destruction, while in admitting them there might be chances, at least, of escape. To her caresses she added bribes, and held out the hope of a more splendid destiny, till he yielded to her demands, and was amazed to find himself courted without reserve, his house besieged by her repeated visits, all his movements watched and followed.

[1] Juvenal, x. 331.:

"Optimus hic et formosissimus idem
Gentis patriciæ rapitur miser, extinguendus
Messalinæ oculis."

This C. Silius is supposed to have been the son of Silius the commander of the Roman forces in Gaul under Tiberius, who was consul A.U. 766, and put an end to his own life, being charged with majestas in 777: see above.

Brilliant presents were thrust upon him, the highest public office laid at his feet, and finally the slaves, the freedmen, and all the glittering retinue which attended the emperor himself, were arrayed before his door, as if the fortunes of the principate had been actually transferred to him.[1]

Precipitation of Silius. A. D. 48. A. U. 801.

But Messalina was inconstant; her amour with Silius, however flagrant its guilt, lost somewhat of its charm from its very openness and facility, and the object of her capricious passion perceived that she too often strayed from him to new and unknown rivals. He was mortified and alarmed, and ventured to demand the immediate fulfilment of her most glowing promises. Let us wait no longer, he said, on the old man's slow decay: the innocent might be content to bide their time, and amuse themselves with the pleasures of anticipation; but guilty as they were, they must act at once with promptitude and boldness. He urged that he was now single and childless, and prepared to adopt Britannicus: were Claudius once removed Messalina, he vowed, should retain in his arms all the power and splendour she had enjoyed by the side of the emperor. He would seize the supreme authority, but he would reign in the name of Messalina's son, the last scion of the Cæsarean family. To these instances, however, his paramour was now less eager to listen; not from any lingering regard for her miserable husband, but through fear of raising her lover to a position in which, in his turn, he might prove unfaithful to herself. Nevertheless the prospect of a pretended marriage still inflamed and stimulated her, from the very grandeur of its infamy, which gives the last flavour to crime in the imagination of the most wanton of criminals.[2] *I am*

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 12.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 26.: "Nomen tamen matrimonii concupivit, ob magnitudinem infamiæ, cujus apud prodigos novissima voluptas est."

well aware, says Tacitus, whose steps we have been closely following, *what a fiction and fable it will be deemed, that in a town which knows everything, and keeps no secrets, any human being ever reached such a pitch of audacity, least of all one a consul designate, the other the consort of the sovereign, as to meet on a day appointed, with witnesses to sign and seal, as for a regular and legitimate marriage; that she should listen to the words of the diviners, approach the temples, sacrifice to the Gods, and recline herself at the nuptial board; finally, that she should surrender herself as to the embraces of a husband, and the rites of the nuptial chamber. But far be it from me to invent or to colour for the marvel's sake: I only relate precisely that which those who have gone before me have themselves heard and committed to writing.*[1]

Tacitus affirms that Messalina and Silius were regularly married.

The historian requires us to believe,—and his account corresponds with those of every other existing authority,—that Messalina was actually married to Silius with the most formal ceremonies, during the lifetime of her legitimate husband, and without any act of divorce having passed between them; for the deed, though enacted publicly before all the rest of the world, was done without the husband's knowledge, who was the last to learn the disgrace which had fallen on his house.[2] Such an incident has assuredly no parallel in civilized life: to admit it as a fact, we must suppose at least that the most sacred forms and feelings of society were at the time confounded or abjured, that the Romans of the age of Claudius were living alike without laws and national principles. But for such a supposition

Incredibility of this account.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 27.: "Haud sum ignarus fabulosum visum iri . . . . sed nihil compositum miraculi causa, verum audita scriptaque senioribus tradam."

[2] Juvenal, *l.c.*: "Dedecus ille domus sciet ultimus." This is not a mere phrase of rhetoric, but is fully confirmed by the historians.

there is no ground whatever. There was at this period no such relaxation of conventional restrictions; on the contrary, the reign of Claudius, himself a formalist and a purist, was probably marked by a strong reaction of strictness and austerity on the most delicate points of usage. If the law allowed a woman formally to repudiate her husband, yet such an act could only be done by direct communication with him; whereas Tacitus declares that Messalina demanded the rites of marriage with Silius unknown to Claudius, and therefore while still the legal wife of a living husband.[1] Can we suppose that the culprits, however reckless themselves, would have found creatures so subservient to their wild behests as to rush on the certain punishment which must have awaited their abetting them? In accepting the common story of this marriage we are driven at least to the notion that Claudius was reputed at the time no better than an idiot, with whom any extravagance might be ventured: yet we have seen ample grounds to think far more favourably both of his understanding and courage. It happens, however, that a word dropped almost, as it would seem, accidentally by Suetonius supplies a clue to the real character of this extraordinary event, and may remove from the story at least its grossest improbability. It is not clear, indeed, whether the writer himself believes the version of the occurrence at which he hints. This circumstance, however, is of little importance to its correctness; for Suetonius, as we have seen, was too fond of a ribald scandal to brook the overthrow of the popular tale of wonder. Claudius, it is suggested, had been assured by the diviners that evil was about to befall the husband of Messalina. From such superstitions few indeed at that time were exempt, and his yielding to

The marriage possibly instigated by Claudius himself.

[1] For the women's licence of divorcing their husbands under the later republic and the empire, see Cic. *ad Div.* viii. 7.; Senec. *de Benef.* iii. 16.; Martial, vi. 7.; Juvenal, vi. 224.

them is no argument of peculiar weakness. He conceived the idea of evading his impending fate by marrying his wife to another man. It was rumoured, accordingly, that the nuptials of Silius were actually of the emperor's own contrivance; that he in fact not only recommended and urged them, but, to prevent evasion, sealed himself the documents necessary to their validity.[1] It is not mentioned, indeed, but of this there can be no reasonable doubt, that he had previously divorced his wife in due form, in order to make her new marriage legitimate. Simple and unceremonious as the act of divorcement might be, it was nevertheless of immense significance. The scandalmongers of the day, the parasites of Claudius, the foes of Messalina, above all, Agrippina herself in her memoirs, may have combined, each for reasons of their own, to heighten the colouring of the story by dropping this essential feature in it; but it seems far more likely that this conspiracy against the truth of history should have succeeded, than that the marriage itself with its bright array of Auspices and Flamens, of attendants and witnesses, should have been celebrated in defiance of law, religion, and the common feeling of the people, without the sanction of the emperor and husband.

Combination of the freed men against Messalina.

The sequel of the narrative, as told by Tacitus himself, will tend to confirm this view. The emperor's household were struck with consternation, and the freedmen, who wielded his power, trembled, we are assured, at a revolution of the palace so strange and ominous. From the passion which Messalina had conceived for Silius, they had already anticipated danger, even before it

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 29.: "Nam illud omnem fidem excesserit, quod nuptiis quas Messalina cum adultero Silio fecerat, tabellas dotis et ipse consignaverit, *inductus quasi de industria simularentur*, ad avertendum transferendumque periculum, quod imminere ipsi per quædam ostenta portenderetur." The construction of the sentence is difficult, but its meaning can hardly be doubted.

reached the height of an audacious defiance. Callistus, Pallas, and Narcissus had all shared in the alarm, and had combined to deter her from the indulgence of an intrigue, more perilous to herself and to them than any of the licentious loves to which she had before abandoned herself. That she should stray to the embraces of a freedman, that an obscure player, such as her favourite Mnester, should *dance himself* into the chamber of the empress, might be a disgrace to the emperor; but the intrusion there of a patrician and a senator, a man of ability as well as consideration, was in fact a defiance to themselves.[1] When, however, it appeared that their opposition would have no other effect than to expose them to her resentment, they desisted from their futile admonitions, and the two first of the associates seemed to have resigned themselves to let things take their course. Narcissus, however, whether from personal apprehensions, or urged by Agrippina, determined that the empress should fall. The marriage with Silius, once effected,—and it mattered little how it had actually been brought about,—might be represented as an insult to the husband, treason against the prince, impiety towards the Gods. Nevertheless, though plainly required to defend himself, the state, and the people with a high hand, the firmness of Claudius could not be depended upon; such was the sluggishness of his feelings, such his devotion to his consort, so many the deeds of blood he had already perpetrated at her demand. Caution and artifice were required in dealing with one so weak, so easily impressible by the first speaker, but not less easily moved by his next successor. As soon as Messalina's daring project was executed, and while, as we are assured, it was yet unknown to Claudius, who was at

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 28.: "Dum histrio cubiculum principis insultaverit, dedecus quidem inlatum; sed discidium procul abfuisse: nunc juvenem nobilem .... majorem ad spem accingi."

the time performing sacrifices at Ostia, Narcissus persuaded two women, with whom his master was familiar, to break to him the terrible news. One of these, named Calpurnia, demanded an interview, and throwing herself at his feet announced with loud lamentations the circumstances of his dishonour. The other, a Greek freedwoman, named Cleopatra, who was standing by, thereupon inquired her authority, and she desired, as had been pre-arranged, that Narcissus should be interrogated.[1] Thus brought upon the scene, the favourite humbly confessed his fault in having too long concealed the crimes of his mistress, and her amours with many a noble citizen, with a Titius, a Vettius, and a Plautius; but the present case, he asserted, was more atrocious than any of these, and he could no longer keep silence. *Did Claudius know that he had been divorced by his own wife? that the people, the senate, the soldiers, had all witnessed the marriage of Silius? was he yet unconscious that, unless he acted with vigour, the city was even now in the power of the* husband *of Messalina?*[2]

Claudius incensed and alarmed.

Claudius, we are assured, was surprised and astounded at this revelation of guilt in one whose fidelity he had never doubted. It was difficult to persuade him of the fact; but it was confirmed again and again by the officers of his household. The plans of Narcissus had been well laid: all conspired to assure the emperor that he was the victim of an abominable crime; that his honour, and still more his power and safety, were fatally compromised. Even on the supposition that

[1] Of these women Tacitus says with a circumlocution which is meant for delicacy, "Quarum is corporibus maxime insueverat." Yet it is impossible not to suspect that this Calpurnia is the same whom Agrippina afterwards subverted, "Quia formam ejus laudaverat princeps, *nulla libidine*, sed fortuito sermone." See *Ann.* xii. 22.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 29, 30.: "An discidium tuum nosti? nam matrimonium Silii vidit populus et senatus et miles; ac ni propere agis, tenet urbem maritus."

he had himself set this marriage on foot with the object which has been suggested, we may still understand how the representations of interested advisers might persuade him to regard it very differently after its accomplishment, and make him feel that his device for evading a distant danger had actually entangled him in another more imminent. But, however this may be, he readily acceded, we are told, to the instances of those about him, urging him to throw himself at once into the camp of the prætorians, and postpone revenge or justice till he had secured his safety. Their object was to prevent an interview between him and his wife. On his way to Rome he was almost overpowered by his alarms. *Am I yet emperor? . . . Is Silius no longer a subject?* were the questions he was continually asking: and so great was his terror, such the apparent prostration of his power of will and purpose, that Vitellius and Largus, who accompanied him in his carriage, feared to animate a courage which they apprehended would again fail him at the last moment.[1]

Nuptial orgies of Messalina.

The scene now changes to the suburban palace of the bridegroom, where Messalina was abandoning herself to voluptuous transports. The season was mid-autumn, the vintage was in full progress; the wine-press was groaning, the ruddy juice was streaming; women girt with scanty fawnskins danced as drunken Bacchanals around her: while she herself, with her hair loose and disordered, brandished the thyrsus in the midst, and Silius by her side, buskined and crowned with ivy, tossed his head to the flaunting strains of Silenus and the Satyrs. Vettius, one, it seems, of the wanton's less fortunate paramours, attended the ceremony, and climbed in merriment a lofty tree in the garden. When asked what he saw, he replied, *An awful storm*

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 31.: "An ipse imperii potens? an Silius privatus esset?"

from Ostia; and whether there was actually such an appearance, or whether the words were spoken at random, they were accepted afterwards as an omen of the catastrophe which quickly followed.[1]

Consternation on the report of the emperor's wrath.

For now in the midst of these wanton orgies the rumour swiftly spread, and swiftly messengers arrived to confirm it, that Claudius *knew it all*, that Claudius was on his way to Rome, and was coming in anger and for vengeance. The lovers part: Silius for the forum and the tribunals; Messalina for the shade of her gardens on the Pincian, the price of blood of the murdered Asiaticus. The jovial crew was scattered on every side: but meanwhile armed soldiers had surrounded the spot, and all that could be seized were thrown suddenly into chains. Messalina, sobered in a moment by the lightning flash which revealed her danger, had not lost her presence of mind. She resolved to confront the emperor. She summoned her son and daughter to accompany her into their father's presence; at the same time entreated the chief of the Vestals to attend her, and intercede for her with the supreme pontiff. Three only of her women ventured to remain by her side; with these she traversed the length of the city on foot; but her appearance in distress and mourning, on which she had counted for commiseration, attracted no voice or gesture of compassion, and mounting a common cart at the gates she proceeded sadly on the road to Ostia.[2]

Meeting of Claudius and Messalina.

Claudius was at the same time advancing, but slowly and timidly; for, amongst his other causes of alarm, he distrusted the loyalty of Lusius Geta, the prefect of his guards, and knew not whether he was about to enter Rome as an emperor or a captive. Narcissus, however, was at hand and boldly urged that, at such a crisis, the

[1] Tac. *l.c.*: "Sive ceperat ea species, seu forte lapsa vox in præsagium vertit."
[2] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 32.

command of the soldiers should be transferred for a single day to one of his trusty freedmen, at the same time offering himself to take it. Claudius consented; Narcissus assumed the command; and while the train moved slowly along, insisted on taking his seat in the emperor's carriage, lest Vitellius and Largus, less resolute than himself, should allow his courage to evaporate. Even to the last indeed Claudius still vacillated. At one moment he exclaimed with fitful vehemence against the abominable crimes of his consort, but again he melted into tears at the recollection of her children; while Vitellius, not knowing how the matter might end, discreetly confined himself to such exclamations as *How shocking!* and, *Is it possible?* Narcissus could prevail neither on him nor on Largus to reason calmly with their master, and confirm him in the apprehension of his intolerable wrong. Such were the circumstances under which Messalina came in sight, and requested leave to present to him Britannicus and Octavia. Narcissus could only whisper in his ear the odious name of Silius, and remind him of the divorce, the marriage, and the treason, while he thrust letters at the same moment into his hand containing proof of her numerous infidelities. He contrived indeed to prevent the children being shown to him; but the vestal Vibidia forced her way into the emperor's presence, and claimed perhaps the privilege of her order to save a passing criminal from death. Narcissus was obliged to assure her that his master would himself hear the culprit, and give her an opportunity of defence.[1]

Execution of Silius, and judgment of his accomplices.

Claudius meanwhile uttered not a word. Vitellius affected ignorance of the circumstances alleged, and shrank from the responsibility of giving any orders. Narcissus took the lead, and every one yielded to him the position he had thus boldly assumed. He required

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 33, 34.

the house of Silius to be thrown open, and caused the emperor to be conducted thither. In the hall stood the image of Silius the father, disgraced by Tiberius, which the senate had ordered to be overthrown; while the effigies of the Neros and Drusi, the kinsmen of the emperor himself, were placed ignominiously behind it. When his indignation had been sufficiently inflamed by this spectacle, which seemed of itself to proclaim the criminality of the culprit's projects, Claudius was hurried to the camp. The prætorians stood to arms to receive him: he was thrust on the tribunal, and, prompted by Narcissus, made to utter a few confused words, whereupon they called aloud for the condign punishment of the guilty. Silius, arrested and brought in fetters to the spot, declined to defend himself; nor would he stoop to any entreaties except only for speedy death. He was executed forthwith, together with Titius, Vettius, and altogether seven knights of distinguished family, accused of abetting him in his crime.[1] Mnester the dancer was added to the number, that, among so many honourable victims, no pity might seem to be extended to a mere ignoble player, though he vehemently protested that no man had so stoutly resisted the seductions of Messalina, and that he was among the first on whom, had she succeeded, her resentment was destined to fall. Another youth of family, named Montanus, was included in the proscription, for no other crime than that of having for a single day found favour in the eyes of the adulteress.

[1] The "lex Julia de adulteriis" required that there should be seven Roman citizens witnesses to a divorce; and if it be true that Claudius had actually divorced his wife in order to marry her to Silius, it seems not unlikely that these were the parties, whom it was thought advisable to remove. The act of divorce was read by a freedman, and this part may have been enacted by Mnester. Paulus *in Digest.* xxiv. 2. § 9. Comp. Juvenal, vi. 46.: "Collige sarcinulas, dicet libertus, et exi."

Nevertheless Messalina still hoped. She had withdrawn again to the gardens of Lucullus, and was there engaged in composing addresses of supplication to her husband, in which her pride and long accustomed insolence still faintly struggled with her fears. Narcissus was not insensible to his danger, and was anxious to strike his last blow without delay. But the emperor still paltered with the treason. He had retired to his palace; he had bathed, anointed, and lain down to supper; and warmed with wine and generous cheer, he had actually despatched a message to the *poor creature*, as he called her, bidding her come the next day and plead her cause before him. Narcissus knew how easy might be the passage from compassion to love; even the solitary night and the vacant couch would kindle, he feared, a sentiment of yearning and compunction in the fond dotard's mind. Gliding from the chamber, he boldly ordered a tribune and some centurions to go and slay his victim. *Such*, he said, *was the emperor's command;* and his word was obeyed without hesitation. Under the direction of the freedman Euodus, the armed men sought the outcast in her gardens, where she lay prostrate on the ground, by the side of her mother Lepida. While their fortunes flourished dissensions had existed between the two; but now, in her last distress, the mother had refused to desert her child, and only strove to nerve her resolution to a voluntary death. *Life*, she urged, *is over; nought remains to look for but a decent exit from it.* But the soul of the reprobate was corrupted by her vices; she retained no sense of honour; she continued to weep and groan as if hope still existed; when suddenly the doors were burst open, the tribune and his swordsmen appeared before her, and Euodus assailed her, dumb-stricken as she lay, with contumelious and brutal reproaches. Roused at last to the consciousness of her desperate condition she took

Vacillation of Claudius and death of Messalina.

a weapon from one of the men's hands and pressed it trembling against her throat and bosom. Still she wanted resolution to give the thrust, and it was by a blow of the tribune's falchion that the horrid deed was finally accomplished. The death of Asiaticus was avenged on the very spot; the hot blood of the wanton smoked on the pavement of his gardens, and stained with a deeper hue the variegated marbles of Lucullus. The body was given up to her mother. Claudius had not yet risen from table when it was announced to him that Messalina was no more. Whether she had fallen by her own hand or by another's was not distinctly declared; nor did he inquire. Again he called for wine, pledged his guests, heard songs and music, and exhausted all the formalities of the banquet. Nor on the following day did he allude to the circumstance, or manifest any emotion of joy or hatred, of anger or sorrow, neither on seeing the triumphant foes of Messalina, nor her sorrowing children. The senate favoured the oblivion he seemed to court for the event, by decreeing that her name should be effaced from all public and private monuments. Narcissus was rewarded with the ornaments of the quæstorship.[1]

Intrigues for providing a successor to Messalina.

Such were the circumstances of the fall of Messalina, as they were commonly related and believed. Stamped with the authority of Tacitus and Juvenal, they have since been received and repeated by all historians of the empire. Whatever the crimes of the miserable woman may have been,—and the stain of wantonness as well as of cruelty so often in her station allied to it, is indelibly attached to her name,—there seems reason to sur-

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 37, 38.; Dion. lx. 31.; Suet. *Claud.* 39. This writer mentions, as an instance of the forgetfulness or absence of mind of Claudius, that after the death of Messalina, he was heard to ask at supper, *Why my lady did not come?* "cur domina non veniret." Messalina can hardly have been more than twenty-three or twenty-four at her death.

mise that her enormities have been exaggerated by sinister influence, and that the last fatal act, in particular, for which she suffered was misrepresented by a monstrous artifice. It may still remain doubtful whether she was the victim of Agrippina's ambition, or of the fears of the freedmen; whether these two powers combined together for her overthrow, or whether each followed its own objects with mutual jealousy and distrust. The factions which still festered in the bosom of the palace soon made themselves odiously apparent. During the first fever of his apprehensions, and while still, perhaps, under the wing of his faithful prætorians, Claudius, it is said, in the fulness of his heart, had made confidants of his soldiers, and had declared to them, that since matrimony had succeeded so ill with him, never again would he subject himself to the caprices of another consort; if he forgot this vow they might hack him in pieces with their swords.[1] But this resolution was of very short duration. His freedmen had determined otherwise; the most powerful among them sought each to secure his power by raising a client of his own to the first place in his affections, and he was too easily led by the artifices of those about him to make any resistance to wishes which were seconded by his own amorous temperament. But he was perplexed by the difficulty of choosing between the candidates offered for his selection, all of whom were equally ready to yield to him. Narcissus intrigued for Ælia Petina, the same whom Claudius had formerly repudiated; Callistus for Lollia Paulina, the rejected of the emperor Caius, while Pallas became the champion of Agrippina herself. The first was recommended on the ground of her former intimacy, as well as her connexion with the

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 26.: "Quatenus sibi matrimonia male cederent permansurum se in cælibatu; ac nisi permansisset non recusaturum confodi manibus ipsorum."

imperial house through the family of the Antonii; the second had the merit, in addition to her immense riches, of being childless, and therefore the less likely to regard Britannicus with jealousy; the last, besides her descent from Germanicus, and the popular favour which accompanied her, had the advantage of being able to plead her own cause covertly, by the opportunities consanguinity gave her of hanging fondly upon her uncle, and enticing him with her unsuspected caresses.[1] If the charms of Agrippina, then perhaps three and thirty years of age, had already passed their prime, her powers of artifice and intrigue had reached their full maturity; and she soon effected the impression at which she aimed.[2] Ere yet the emperor had avowed his intention of espousing her, she was conscious that the prize was within her reach, and began to exercise over him the influence of a wife. She began already to extend her views to the elevation of her son Domitius by uniting him to the orphan Octavia; and as the girl was affianced to Lucius Silanus, the son of the murdered Appius, she did not hesitate to plan the frustration of that arrangement by aiming a scandalous charge against the betrothed husband. She gained over Vitellius; this supple courtier pretended, that as censor two years before, he had noted the young man's immoralities, and now insinuated a charge of incest against him.[3] Claudius, as guardian

Ambition and artifices of Agrippina.

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 26.: "Per jus osculi et blanditiarum occasiones pellectus in amorem." Of the three rivals Tacitus says, "Suam quæque nobilitatem, formam, opes contendere." The first qualification seems to apply especially to Petina, the second to Agrippina, and the last to Lollia; and it seems clear from what follows (*Ann.* xii. 22.) that the divorced wife of Caius had not been deprived of the magnificent dowry she had brought him.

[2] Agrippina seems to have been born in 769. Suetonius tells us (*Calig.* 7.) that the three sisters were born in consecutive years, and the birth of Julia (Livilla in Suetonius) is placed by Tacitus in 771. Agrippina seems to have been the eldest of the three.

[3] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 4.: "Nomine Censoris serviles fallacias obtegens."

of the public virtue, was shocked, as the confederates expected, at this odious imputation, and allowed Vitellius, although the censorship was passed and the lustrum closed, to promulgate his edict for removing him from the senate.[1] The blow was the more severe inasmuch as he had been advanced that year to the prætorship; and he was now degraded without being heard in his own defence, perhaps even before he was aware of the conspiracy against him. This was the first step towards rescinding the act of his betrothal, which speedily followed. The office to which he had been preferred in consideration of his affinity to the imperial house, he was required to resign on the last day of the year; and thus disgraced, he was suffered, for a time at least, to hide himself in obscurity, while the way was smoothed for the destined nuptials of Domitius and Octavia.

The senate sanctions the union of an uncle with a niece.

Yet an obstacle still intervened between Agrippina and the elevation to which she aspired. Ancient usage and the national sentiment long engrafted upon it, though with no express legislative declaration, forbade among the Romans the marriage of an uncle and niece. Claudius had just declared his horror at incest, and here was an union proposed to him to which that term in its full force at least popularly applied. It had been rumoured, indeed, whether truly or not, that the first Cæsar was prepared to defy the national sense of delicacy; but Claudius had less courage, and if it was easy to overcome his moral scruples, it was more difficult to confirm his resolution. Again Vitellius came forward to Agrippina's assistance. He took occasion to demand

Vitellius had been joined with Claudius in the office. Of Silanus Seneca says (*Apocol.* 8.): "Sororem suam festivissimam omnium puellarum, quam omnes Venerem vocarent, maluit Junonem vocare."

[1] Tac. *l. c.*: "Lecto pridem Senatu." The order had been duly revised, and in strictness the removal of the culprit from its ranks should have awaited another lectio.

publicly of the emperor whether he would submit to the blind prejudices of the populace, or be swayed by the counsel and authority of the senate? Claudius decorously replied that he was himself only one of the citizens, and could not venture to controvert the judgment of the fathers of the republic. *Then repair, I conjure you, to the palace, and there await my coming*, said Vitellius earnestly; and then entering the curia, he besought an immediate hearing on a subject, most important, as he declared, to the commonwealth. After expatiating with feeling on the splendid solitude of the Cæsar in the recesses of his palace, and his need of a faithful partner to share his pleasures and anxieties, he protested, that if Claudius now yearned for a consort, he had amply proved by his long devotion to the laws that he was yielding to no unworthy impulse. The orator proceeded to enlarge on the happy fortune of the times, in having a prince who sought only a legal marriage, instead of invading, as others had been known to do, the marriage rights of the citizens; and then recommending the claims and merits of Agrippina, he argued with all the art of a practised rhetorician against the prejudices which seemed to forbid so eligible an union. Other nations, he said, permitted such alliances; nor was it beneath the dignity of Rome to consult the customs even of foreigners. Formerly the marriage of cousins had been prohibited, yet its recent permission had produced no evil.[1] Similar results, he argued, would follow a wise relaxation in the present instance also; and prejudices, after all,

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 6.: "Sobrinarum diu ignoratæ." On the marriage of cousins german, the commentators refer to Plutarch, *Quæst. Rom.* 6., who shows the occasion, but not the date of the restriction being removed. The union of Marcellus and Julia was an illustrious instance in later times. But marriage of uncles with nieces was forbidden. The law of Claudius licensed marriage with a brother's daughter, but not with a sister's, and this distinction was in force in the time of Gaius. See *Inst.* i. 62.

were the growth of habit and usage, and would follow the current of legislation. The compliance of a part, at least, of his audience outran even the eloquence of the speaker. The harangue was hardly concluded before a tumult of assentation arose which admitted of no further discussion, but threatened, if he yet hesitated, to overbear the prince's scruples by force. A multitude had already collected, crying aloud that the Roman people was of one mind with the senators. Vitellius swiftly bore the news to his anxious master, and Claudius, passing rapidly through the crowd of the forum, amidst a burst of acclamations, entered the curia, and moved for a decree to legalize the marriages in question. Claudius and Agrippina were united in the year 802. It might seem a delicate mode of flattery to contract these preposterous alliances; but a knight, named Alledius, was the only citizen who could be induced, by the hope of the prince's or even of Agrippina's favour, to do such violence to natural feeling.[1] This, however, was of little importance; the conscience of the feeble Claudius was easily put to sleep, and it became the business of his mistress, now enthroned by his side, to lull it constantly by gentle opiates, through the course of wickedness on which she was about to enter.[2]

Marriage of Claudius and Agrippina.

It is not unimportant to notice these lingering scruples, this solemn discussion, and this sudden downfall of the barriers of religious principle, at a moment when the whole bent of legislation had been studiously directed to preserve or restore the sanctions of ancient usage.

The authority of the senate and emperor over matters of national usage.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 7.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 4—7. Suetonius tells us that Claudius repealed a provision of the Julian law introduced by Tiberius, which forbade men of sixty years from contracting marriage. It has been supposed that this was done to legalize his own union with Agrippina, as though at this time he was himself almost on the verge of sixty. See *Claud.* 23. and the note of Baumgarten Crusius. But he was actually fifty-eight only.

They mark, on the one hand, the general observance thus far of ancient forms; while, on the other, they allow us to perceive how hollow that observance was, and how easily it could be overruled by modern licentiousness. They may lead us indeed to reject as incredible the common story of Messalina's impudent no-marriage; nevertheless, they may prepare us for violations not less audacious, of the laws of nature and of man, which we shall meet with hereafter. The authority of the senate and the licence of the Cæsar to create law and right of their own sovereign will, were thus established with the concurrence of the people, and to their entire satisfaction; yet the authority and licence were shared by these two still co-ordinate powers; it remained yet to be seen whether either could destroy the other, or if destroyed continue to exist without it.

Suicide of L. Silanus.

A century earlier the wretch who was driven to despair by persecution stalked with gloomy resolution to the hearthstone of his enemy, and slew himself upon it, to establish an avenging demon in his house for ever.[1] But this superstition had now died away, or the chambers of the Cæsar were no longer accessible, and the suicide could seek his last consolation only in the hope of fixing on the tyrant the indignation of his fellow-countrymen. Silanus chose the moment of Agrippina's triumph to put an end to his own life, assured perhaps that he could not long escape her enmity, and exulting in the power of casting at least a gloom over the city on the day of her ill-omened nuptials. Nevertheless her cruelty was restrained neither by shame nor fear: his sister Calvina, the presumed partner of his guilt, was sentenced to exile by the voice of the subservient senators; and to the decree which inflicted this punishment, Claudius caused a clause to be added

[1] See the story of Cicero in Plutarch, *Cic.* 47., vol. iii., ch. xxvi.

enjoining the lustration of the city by solemn sacrifices.[1] The citizens, who had before scowled or murmured, laughed now at the notion that at such a moment, when one illustrious incest was openly paraded, the secret guilt of another should require a special expiation. It is said, however, that Agrippina was moved, even in the first flush of her success, by the disgust at her conduct, and sought to extenuate her disfavour by recalling Seneca from exile, and promoting him to the prætorship. The philosopher was already in high repute for his character and acquirements, and his appointment to the care of her child's education was perhaps the best, as well as the most popular, that could be made. It is probable, however, from his sharing the disgrace of Julia, that he was previously connected with Agrippina herself, and held a conspicuous place in the clique or faction which had roused Messalina's apprehensions.[2]

Recall of Seneca from exile.

The marriage of the mother was quickly followed by the betrothal of the son, then in his twelfth year, to Octavia, an alliance for which Claudius had been gradually prepared by the counsels of the friends he most relied on. Domitius took his place at once by the side of Britannicus in every favour the doting emperor could bestow: nevertheless, the complete ascendancy she had acquired over her facile husband failed to allay the jealousies of the new-made empress. Of Ælia Petina indeed, who seems to have been defended by the insignificance of her character, we hear no more; but the rivalry of the rich and noble Lollia was not to be forgiven. Repulsed by one emperor and disappointed of another, she was accused of consulting the Chaldæans about the imperial nuptials.[3] Clau-

L. Domitius betrothed to Octavia.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 8.
[2] Tac. *l. c.* For the date (A.U. 802) see Clinton, *Fast. Rom.*
[3] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 22.

dius himself condescended to harangue against her in the senate; but in denouncing her guilt, he wandered, as usual, into historic details on the greatness and antiquity of her family, and commiserating her fall, contented himself with demanding her banishment from Italy, with the loss of her famous fortune, a sum of five million sesterces being alone reserved to her. But Agrippina, it seems, was dissatisfied with the lenity of this sentence, and according to common belief, sent a tribune to invite or compel her to kill herself.[1] About the same time another matron named Calpurnia,—whether she was the same who has before been mentioned as a favourite of the emperor does not clearly appear,—was also disgraced by the artifices of the empress, for no other cause than because Claudius had been heard to speak in praise of her beauty: it was admitted, indeed, that the remark had been made in perfect innocence, and the Fury of the palace did not push her anger to extremities.

Domitius, adopted by Claudius, assumes the name of Nero.

Agrippina still marched on triumphantly. Claudius, beset by freedmen, and especially by Pallas, the creature and, as was supposed, the paramour of his consort, yielded to the persuasions which were blindly urged upon him. He was reminded of the example of Augustus, and again of Tiberius, in fortifying the position of their own children by calling older kinsmen to its support. Both precedents were of evil augury. But the imperial pedant was proud to walk in the steps of his renowned predecessors; and in the year 803, the next after his marriage, he consented to adopt Domitius into the Claudian house, to place him formally on the same line of succession with his own

[1] Dion tells a horrid story, that when the head of Lollia was brought for her inspection, Agrippina forced open the mouth with her own hand, to look for certain marks in the teeth, by which to assure herself of its identity. lx. 32.

son, and, inasmuch as he was three years the senior, to give him actual precedence in the career of honours. This, it was remarked by the genealogists, was the first instance of the adoption of a son by any Claudius of the patrician branch of that illustrious house, which had maintained its name and honours in direct male descent from the era of Attus Clausus the Sabine, if not of Clausus the ally of Æneas. It proved fatal to the race. L. Domitius thus introduced into his stepfather's family received the name of Nero, a name long renowned for the obligations it had laid on Rome, but destined henceforth to become infamous for ever throughout the world.[1] The marriage to which he was pledged with his cousin Octavia, now become his sister, was incestuous and abominable in the eyes of his countrymen. But worse than this was the position of jealous rivalry in which he was placed with regard to the injured Britannicus. This poor child was supposed, even at his tender years, to have some quickness of parts, and he did not fail to perceive the guile which lurked beneath the pretended affection of Agrippina. One by one the slaves and attendants of his childhood, between whom and himself there existed a mutual attachment, were removed, as he well knew, by her artifices, and replaced by creatures of her own; and by these he was educated as the son of a plebeian client, rather than as a noble by birth, still less as heir to the purple.[2] The elevation, as it may now be called, of this cruel stepmother to the title of Augusta by a decree of the senate seemed to crown her personal ambition.[3] Henceforth she laboured for her son's advancement only. There were few that did not anticipate the

[1] Hor. *Od.* iv. 4. 37.: "Quid debeas, O Roma, Neronibus," &c.

[2] Dion, lx. 32.: ὡς καὶ τῶν τυχόντων τινὰ τρέφεσθαι ἐποίει.

[3] Livia was styled Augusta after her husband's decease; Messalina bore the title on her coins, though these perhaps are provincial; but Agrippina was the first wife of a reigning emperor who enjoyed it by a decree of the senate. See Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* vi. 252. foll.

transfer of the empire to her child from those of Messalina, and the commiseration of the citizens for the hapless Britannicus was already strongly excited.

Agrippina courts the army.

But the contentions of rival princes and the conflicts of civil war were ever flitting before the minds of the occupants of power at Rome. The prætorians had decided the fate of empire at the last vacancy; the legions might be expected to interfere at the next, and throw their weight into the scale between Nero and Britannicus. It was doubtless with a view to conciliate the soldiers that Agrippina's masculine spirit aspired to positions which had hitherto been never occupied by women; that she displayed herself to the citizens and the army in the character of a chief of the legions. To plant a colony was the proper function of an imperator, of one to whom, among other powers, that of taking the auspices and performing the proper rites, was duly intrusted by the vote of the Curies. It was the boast of Agrippina that she was the first, possibly she was the last also, of Roman women who founded a colony of Roman veterans.[1] The illustrious city of Cologne owes its origin to the caprice of this empress, who transformed a village of the Ubii on the Rhine into a stronghold of Roman dominion.[2] Here, or in the camp adjacent, Agrippina had herself been born; here had stood the prætorium of her father Germanicus,

Her foundation of the Colonia Agrippinensis, or Cologne.

[1] The foundation of a city by Dido in the Æneid, and her sitting before the temple *septa armis*, indicated to the Roman reader that she was a queen, not less plainly than the royal title applied in so marked a manner to her.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 27. If originally founded by Agrippa himself, as another passage of Tacitus (*Germ.* 28.) seems to imply, it must have been reconstituted by Agrippina, and received from her the name which is found in inscriptions, of Colonia Claudia Augusta Agrippinensium. It is curious that this abnormal colony has alone of all its kindred foundations retained to the present day the name of Colonia.

and here perhaps her grandsire Agrippa had effected the passage of the frontier stream. Agrippina was fond also of assuming a conspicuous place in military spectacles. When Caractacus, the conquered British chief, was brought in chains before the emperor's tribunal at Rome, where he was surrounded by his guards and the officers, she seated herself on another tribunal by his side, and received together with him the homage of the captive and his family.[1] That a woman should thus take her station in front of the standards was considered bold and unfeminine: the veteran Pliny deemed it worthy of grave remark, as a token of the times in which he had lived, that he had himself in his youth beheld the consort of Claudius witnessing the sea fight of the Fucine lake arrayed in a soldier's cloak, by the side of the imperator.[2] Nor less surprised perhaps were the foreign envoys to see her seated together with the emperor when admitted to a solemn audience. But Agrippina, says Tacitus, affected to be a partner in the empire which her sire had defended and her grandsire won: she boasted herself the daughter of one imperator, the sister of another, the consort of a third; moreover, she expected, and indeed was destined, to become the mother of a fourth; a combination of which there was no previous and probably no later example.[3] Her face was associated with the emperor's on the coinage.[4] It was remarked also

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 36, 37.

[2] Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxxiii. 3.: "Nos vidimus Agrippinam Claudii principis, edente eo navalis prœlii spectaculum, assidentem ei indutam paludamento."

[3] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 42. Germanicus, as the quasi-associate of Tiberius, Claudius, Caius, and Nero. So it was said of Elizabeth, daughter of our Edward IV. and queen of Henry VII., that she was "daughter to a king, sister to a king, wife to a king, and mother to a king, and to two queens also." Strype's *Memorials*, i. c. 35.

[4] Eckhel, *Doct. Numm.* vi. 257.: "Fuit Agrippina ex Augustorum uxoribus prima, cujus imaginem perinde atque suam in nummis signari indulsit maritus."

that her ascending the Capitol in the carpentum, or litter reserved for the priests and the divine images, was an assumption of honours beyond her sex; but this distinction had been conceded by Augustus to Livia, and by Claudius himself to Messalina. But in pride and outward show, no less than in dissoluteness of manners and relentless bloodshed, Agrippina had now learnt to rival the predecessor she had overthrown.[1]

Nero is introduced to public distinctions. A.D. 51. A.U. 804.

The advancement of the youthful Nero to imperial power was in progress even at this early period. In the year 804 he was invested with the gown of manhood, and designated for consul, at the instance of the devoted senate, as soon as he should reach his twentieth year. But in the mean time he was deputed to hold proconsular, or vice-imperial, power beyond the city; which, as he was still retained beneath the roof of the palace, was for the present a mere honorary title, and only a presage of the substance that was to follow. He received, moreover, the flattering style of Prince of the Roman Youth. Agrippina took occasion from these special distinctions, to mark in every way the difference between her son and the still infant Britannicus: the one was to be regarded as a man, the other to be treated always as a child; the one was exhibited to the people in official robes, while the other appeared only, if he appeared at all, in the prætexta of the pupil and the minor. Meanwhile centurions and tribunes, freedmen and tutors, as many as seemed to favour the offspring of Messalina, or even to commiserate his fortune, were removed from about him on various pretences; and his once casually calling his brother by his original name of Domitius was construed into an insult, to which he must have been instigated by the evil disposed among his friends and attendants.[2]

[1] Dion, lx. 33.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 41.

Increasing influence of Agrippina.

Whatever, indeed, were the crimes and excesses of the wretched Messalina, there can be no doubt that her artifices or, if we may so believe, her genial fascinations had surrounded her with many friends, and that the enterprise of Narcissus against her had not been unattended with danger to himself and to the emperor. We have seen that Vitellius and Largus had refrained from stimulating Claudius against her, and that Lusius Geta, the prefect, was deemed so attached to her interests as to be an object of distrust and apprehension to his agonized master. Another officer of the guard, named Crispinus, was still regarded as her partisan; and both these men, important from the position they held, were supposed to be still devoted to the interests of her desolate children. Agrippina watched with sleepless vigilance for the moment to supplant them, and at last she prevailed on the emperor to risk a revolution of the palace by dismissing them from their posts, and replacing them with a favourite and staunch adherent of her own. The new prefect, Afranius Burrhus, was brave and able, and once armed with authority from the emperor, made himself master of the camp without a struggle.[1] We shall see hereafter that he was, moreover, independent and honest, as far perhaps as his position could allow; but he understood that it was by Agrippina that he had been advanced, and by her he might at any time be displaced, and he attached himself to her interests and the faction of her son, as far as it was now opposed to that of Britannicus. The destruction which fell on many of the freedmen may probably be ascribed to their adherence to the party of Messalina; Callistus, the patron of Lollia, seems to have sunk into obscurity; while Narcissus, who had recommended Petina, could with difficulty retain, notwithstanding his signal services, any por-

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 43.

tion of his former influence. The paramount sway which Agrippina now exercised over her spouse, and over all who sought to retain his favour, was remarkably manifested in her saving Vitellius from a charge of majesty brought against him by a senator; who not only failed in his prosecution, but was himself sentenced to banishment, and interdicted fire and water. Nevertheless, though Agrippina triumphed, the people were uneasy at the prospect of civil war, or unnatural murder which seemed opening before them. The year 804 was celebrated for the prodigies which attended it: among the most calamitous of these was an earthquake, by which many houses in Rome were overturned, and many people killed in the panic which ensued. The harvest failed generally throughout the provinces, and the supply of corn to the capital ran low. Only fifteen days' consumption remained in the granaries. The populace rioted for bread, and actually attacked the emperor when transacting business in the forum. They drove him tumultuously from his tribunal, and would have injured and perhaps torn him in pieces, but for the prompt succour of a military force.[1]

Measures of Claudius for maintaining morality and good order.

Augustus had required that every revelation of the future should be stamped with the licence of government, and Tiberius had expelled from Italy the pretenders to astrological science. Claudius, in the spirit of imitation, perhaps, rather than of intelligent policy, sought to enforce this edict, which the citizens had treated with scornful disregard. The measure, indeed, as Tacitus declares, was fruitless; yet it hardly deserves to be called harsh. Perhaps its immediate

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 43. Suetonius (*Claud.* 18.) says that he was pelted with crusts of bread. This licentious conduct of the populace does not imply any special contempt for Claudius. One of the most deeply respected of all the emperors was treated in the same manner at a later period. See Aurel. Victor, *Epit.* 30. in *Anton. Pio.*

motive was the reputed crime of a young Scribonianus, the son of the officer who had revolted in Dalmatia. He was accused of intriguing against the emperor's life by consulting these dangerous impostors. Claudius was alarmed, but he was also mortified at the ingratitude, as he esteemed it, of one whose life and dignity he had spared in the wreck of his father's fortunes. Scribonianus was banished; nor did he long survive. Some pretended that he fell a victim to poison, while others affirmed that his death was merely natural; so impossible was it to arrive at the truth in such matters, so indifferent, it may be added, were the Romans generally to the truth.[1] At the same time the emperor continued to exert unremitting vigilance in maintaining the dignity of the senatorial order: he took measures for removing from its ranks the members who had descended into poverty, and such as on this account voluntarily resigned received his marked approbation. The thunders of the law, conceived in a spirit of ancient fanaticism, were levelled against matrons who degraded their class by forming connexions with slaves; such abandoned wretches were to be reduced to the state of servitude themselves. It had been often remarked that the freedmen were generally the harshest in their treatment of the less fortunate brethren from whose ranks they had themselves recently emerged; and it was Pallas, the pampered paramour of two empresses, who advised this measure, severe against the unfortunate women, but doubtless still more severe against their more miserable partners in guilt.[2] He received his master's thanks, however, for the wholesome austerity of his counsel, and was recompensed with the prætorian ornaments, and a

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 52.: "Ut quisque credidit vulgavere."

[2] Thus the younger Pliny, telling the story of one Largius Macedo, who was attacked by his slaves, says that he was "Superbus alioqui dominus et sævus, et qui servisse patrem suum parum, immo nimium, meminisset." *Epist.* iii. 14.

colossal grant of public money by the subservient senators. A Cornelius Scipio went so far in adulation as to affirm that he was sprung from Pallas, the legendary king of Arcadia, and moved that he should be specially thanked for deigning to assist their deliberations, and take his place among the servants of the emperor. Claudius undertook however to declare that his freedman was satisfied with honorary distinctions, and would beg respectfully to decline the present, and continue in his state of actual poverty; a poverty, it was remarked, of some three hundred millions of sesterces.[1]

Claudius extends the privileges of the knights.

The favour and authority of this fortunate upstart continued still to increase. He was able to protect his brother Felix, who had been advanced already through his interest to the procuratorship of Judea, where his exactions had driven the people into riot and revolt. It was at his instance also, perhaps, that Claudius now empowered the knights who managed the fisc in the provinces, and even in Rome, to exercise jurisdiction or judicial authority, such as was entrusted to the magistrates, the consuls and prætors at home, and their deputies abroad. This principle of arrangement had already been sanctioned by Augustus with respect to the exceptional government of Egypt; it had been extended sometimes to certain other localities; but it was reserved for Claudius to establish it generally as an instrument of monarchical rule, by which authority derived directly from the chief of the state was placed throughout the empire on the same level as that of the officers of the people.[2]

[1] Tac. xii. 53.: "Sestertii ter millies:" 300 million sesterces, equal about 2,400,000*l.*

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 60.: "Claudius omne jus tradidit de quo totiens seditione aut armis certatum." See Lipsius, *Excurs.* ii. on Tac. *Ann.* xii. The procurators of the emperor were knights, and Tacitus seems to regard this as a settlement of the ancient contest between the senate and the equestrian order for the Judicia.

The influence of Agrippina continued still in the ascendant, nor to the end of her husband's life did it experience any decline; for Claudius was not naturally capricious; he was as patient in suffering as in acting, and never seems to have revolted, even mentally, against the domestic tyranny to which he had now once more subjected himself. Almost the last public act of his principate was receiving, at her instigation, the scandalous charges now brought against Statilius Taurus, a man of wealth and ancestral dignity, who had recently returned to Rome laden, as it was affirmed, with the spoils of the province of Africa. The crime objected to him was not, however, extortion in his government only, but the more odious practice of magic. Claudius allowed his case to be brought under the cognisance of the senate; it was believed, however, that both charges were equally false, and prompted solely by the malice of Agrippina, who coveted his house and gardens. But neither the sympathy of his peers, nor the common persuasion of his innocence, availed to save the object of a powerful enmity. The accused, proud and indignant, preferred a voluntary death to the humiliation of replying to his accusers before a tribunal of freedmen and courtiers; and the senators, who were now seldom consulted in proceedings which related to the emperor's safety and dignity, could only express their sentiments by expelling the prosecutor from their assembly, with a burst of petulant disgust which resisted even Agrippina's efforts to protect him.[1]

Continued influence of Agrippina.

But this covert persecution of one hapless family, and these attacks on the most eminent of the nobles, were exceptions to the general posture of affairs, which were still for the most part conducted with temper and moderation. It was the policy of Claudius, or his ad-

Nero comes forward as the advocate of popular measures.

[1] Tac *Ann.* xii. 59. A.U. 806.

visers, to maintain the populace in good humour at whatever cost, and this might still be effected, at the expense of the tax-payers of the provinces, by multiplied shows and reiterated largesses. While the aged emperor's sun was thus setting with a milder and serener ray than might have been expected from the elements of storm and confusion with which he seemed to be surrounded, another light was rising in the opposite quarter, portending, as was fondly anticipated, a season of beneficent rule and widely extended happiness. In the course of 806, while still only in his sixteenth year, Nero was permitted to celebrate his marriage with Octavia. In order to acquire some popularity for an union of so questionable a character, the young prince was instructed to come forward in public, and graciously plead, in speeches made for him by his tutor, the cause of liberality for more than one distinguished client. He harangued first in behalf of the venerable community of Ilium, the ancestor of Rome, the parent of the Julian race; the glories of which, real or fabled, he set forth with eloquence and ingenuity, and demanded that it should for their sake be relieved from all public burdens for ever.[1] Again he pleaded for the colony of Bononia, for which, when distressed by a ruinous conflagration, he solicited a grant of money. About the same time the Rhodians were allowed to recover their autonomy, which seems to have been withdrawn from them on account of some domestic sedition; and tribute was remitted to Apamea for

[1] It seems not improbable that Lucan makes his apparently purposeless digression to describe the site of Troy (*Phars.* ix. 964. foll.), in compliment to the interest his patron Nero thus showed in the sacred city. The young emperor may have taken to himself the lines applied to Julius:

"Gentis Iuleæ vestris clarissimus aris
Dat pia thura nepos . . . .
Restituam populos; grata vice mœnia reddent
Ausonidæ Phrygibus, Romanaque Pergama surgent."

five years in consideration of the damage it had sustained from an earthquake.[1] Claudius himself made an harangue, which seems to have been highly characteristic of his pedantic style, in favour of granting the boon of immunity to Cos. He spoke largely on the antiquity of the Coans. The Argives, he said, or rather Cœus, the father of Latona, was the first inhabitant of the island; by and by Æsculapius brought thither the divine art of healing, which was practised there with eminent success by his descendants from generation to generation. Having enumerated many of these skilful practitioners, and distinguished the periods in which they flourished, the emperor came at last to the special praise of his own physician Xenophon, and declared that he yielded to his entreaties in relieving his countrymen from all imperial contributions, and devoting their island from henceforth to the service of the god of healing only.[2]

Further triumphs of Agrippina.

The last year of the emperor's life and reign, the 807th of the city, opened once more with prodigies of evil import, which were supposed to betoken the decay of public principle and deterioration of national sentiment.[3] It was natural, perhaps, to augur that the advent of a young and gallant prince to power would commence a new era both in government and in society; that the pensive retrospect of Augustus and his later imitator would be exchanged for a burst of buoyant anticipations, and that Nero would pay his court to the future, as Claudius had venerated the past.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 58.; Suet. *Claud.* 25; *Ner.* 7. The young prince's orations were in Greek. It does not appear clearly, though it may, I think, be inferred from Tacitus, that these last indulgences were obtained by Nero, and I have left the statement equivocal as I found it.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 61. The Byzantians petitioned also for relief and were exempted from payment for five years.

[3] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 64.: "Mutationem morum in deterius portendi."

Among these portents, that which alone can interest us was the fact that all the chief magistracies lost, in the course of a few months, one of their occupants by death; a quæstor, an ædile, a tribune, a prætor, and a consul.[1] This fatality made a considerable impression upon the populace; but none of them was so much alarmed at these omens as Agrippina herself at the boding words which were heard to fall from Claudius in a moment of inebriation, *that it was his fate to suffer the crimes of all his consorts, but at last to punish them.*[2] The palace, it seems, was still distracted by female jealousies. It is remarkable, after the account we have perused of the unpardonable crime and condign punishment of Messalina, together with her guilty associates, that her mother was suffered still to haunt the precincts of power, and to intrigue against the woman who had succeeded in supplanting her daughter. Domitia Lepida, the sister of Cn. Domitius, and cousin as well as sister-in-law to Agrippina, was not many years her senior, and was still reputed little inferior to her in the autumn of their personal charms.[3] But the contest between them was not now for the heart of a paramour. The arts of Lepida were directed to diverting the childish reverence of Nero from his mother to his aunt, and the caresses she lavished upon him seemed to have had some effect on his warm and impressible temper. Agrippina trembled for her influence, not over the actual, but over the

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 64.; Dion, lx. 35 According to Suetonius the old man entertained a presentiment of his approaching end, and betrayed it more than once. *Claud.* 46.

[2] Tac. *l. c.*: "Fatale sibi ut conjugum flagitia ferret dein puniret." Comp. Dion, lx. 34; Suet. *Claud.* 43.

[3] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 64.: "Nec forma ætas opes multum distabant." If Agrippina was now thirty-eight, the mother of Messalina can hardly have been more than forty-five. This Domitia Lepida may be called the younger, to distinguish her from an elder sister of the same name, who will appear on the scene later. See Suet. *Ner.* 34.; Dion, lxi. 17.

future emperor. Both these women, it is said, were equally dissolute in manners, equally violent in temper; each fought for possession of the young prince with the desperate determination to use her power with him to destroy the other. But the genius or the fortune of Agrippina prevailed. She suborned delators to charge her rival with the crime of seeking to marry Claudius after destroying his actual wife by incantations; to this was added the more palpable treason of raising a servile insurrection in Calabria. These charges were deemed to be sufficiently proved, and Claudius gave full scope to the vengeful cruelty of the conqueror. Lepida was condemned and executed, in spite of the remonstrances of Narcissus, rendered desperate himself by the overthrow of the only influence which had hitherto placed any check on the triumphant despotism of Agrippina. Narcissus had received the quæstorial ornaments as the reward of his services; but he had found himself outstripped in the race of favour by Pallas, the confidant of the new empress, and full of discontent and apprehension for himself, he was anxious to save the mother of his own victim, to counterpoise the power which had risen upon her fall.[1] He now muttered moodily to his friends that whether Britannicus or Nero succeeded to power, his own destruction was equally assured: nevertheless, his life, he insinuated, was ever at the service of his master; as he had tracked the adultery of Messalina and Silius, he had ample proofs to convict Pallas and Agrippina also; and he threatened to bring up the offspring of the late empress to avenge himself on the betrayers of his father and the real assassins of his mother.[2]

[1] Tac. *Ann* xi. 38.: "Decreta Narcisso quæstoria insignia; levissimum fastidii ejus, cum supra Pallantem et Callistum ageret."

[2] Tac. *Ann* xii. 65.: "Matris etiam interfectores ulcisceretur." It appears that Narcissus knew that, though himself the most prominent actor in the recent tragedy, there existed actual proof against Agrippina of an important share in the conspiracy.

Such were the conflicting schemes and interests by which, in addition to the ever recurring cares of empire, the declining years of the most patient of masters were disturbed. But Claudius, now in his sixty-fourth year, and exhausted with toil at least as much as by the intemperance in which he may have indulged, fell sick at Rome, and was induced to quit his constant station in the city,—for he had pertinaciously denied himself the customary relaxation of occasional retreats to baths and villas, —for the medicinal air and water of Sinuessa.[1] Agrippina, we are assured, had long determined to hasten his still lingering end, and precipitate by a crime the advent of her son to power. But she continued anxiously to debate with herself what kind of poison to employ; fearing lest, if the agent were too active, the secret might betray itself, and again, if it were too slow and gradual, the victim might come to suspect the cause of his sensible decline, and take measures even in his last hours to defeat her aspirations. The crime of poisoning was rife in Rome. Caius had made elaborate experiments in the science, and many must have been his agents and familiars, who lived by pandering to the murderous passions of the day. One at least of these horrid professors, the infamous Locusta, has obtained a name in the annals of crime, and has been dignified by the grave irony of Tacitus with the title of an instrument of monarchy.[2] The men accused her of being the accomplice of many wicked wives who wished to rid themselves of their husbands; possibly she was equally accessible to either

Decline of Claudius.

Agrippina contrives to poison him.

[1] Strabo, v. p. 351.; Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxxi. 4.; Martial, xi. 8. See Hoeck, *Röm. Gesch.* i. 3, 330.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 66.: "Diu inter instrumenta regni habita." Comp. Juvenal, i. 71.:

"Instituitque rudes melior Locusta propinquas
Per famam et populum nigros efferre maritos."

sex; but the only case recorded against her is that of Agrippina and Claudius, in which she was employed to prepare a potion for the unfortunate emperor. The substance which she offered to compound was calculated to unsettle the mind without producing immediate death.[1] Halotus, one of the slaves of the palace, and the taster of the imperial viands, was engaged to administer the dose, which was concealed in a dish of mushrooms, the favourite delicacy of the emperor's supper table.[2] The treacherous morsel was swallowed; but from the quantity of wine, as was supposed, that he had drunk, or from the natural relief of his overloaded stomach, the poison failed of effect.[3] The murderess was alarmed. She feared discovery from the suspicions of Claudius, or from the treachery of her detestable allies. Throwing away further precautions, she called on the physician Xenophon, whom she had already secured in case of need. This man thrust a poisoned feather down the sufferer's throat under pretence of aiding him to vomit, and this time at least the venom was deadly and the effect sufficiently rapid.[4]

[1] Tac. *l. c.*: "Exquisitum aliquid placebat quod turbaret mentem et mortem differret."

[2] It appears from inscriptions that the office of taster was already known in the court of Augustus. Gruter, p. 602.; Hoeck, *Röm. Gesch.* i. 3. 329.

[3] The words of Tacitus (xii. 67.), "Socordiane Claudii an vinolentia," with some varieties of reading, have caused much perplexity. If they are correct, I should imagine *socordia* to mean the languid action of the internal organs, which might be supposed, with what reason I know not, to retard the operation of the poison. Ruperti quotes from Livy, xxvi. 14.: "Impletæ cibis vinoque venæ minus efficacem in maturanda morte vim veneni faciunt." By the words, "nec vim medicaminis statim intellectam," Walther supposes that the *guests* did not at once perceive that poison had been given: but *intelligere* is the proper word for feeling the effect of a medicine or a wound. Comp. Statius, *Theb.* xi. 546.: "Mox intellecto magis ac magis æger anhelat vulnere."

[4] Tac. *l. c.* There is surely some confusion in the account of Tacitus, whatever may be the corruption of his text. The first poison, as he says himself, was not intended to take speedy effect; the

Claudius fell senseless on his couch, and was removed, as if fainting, to his chamber. Agrippina called for flannels and restoratives, and pretended to apply them to the body, while it lay in the agonies of death, and even after the spirit had departed. The sickness of the emperor was now publicly announced, and the senate summoned to hear the vows of the consuls and priests for his recovery. While these ceremonies were in progress, however, measures were preparing in the palace for the succession of Nero: the doors were kept strictly closed, and placed under guard of the trustiest officers. Agrippina, affecting an excess of grief, held Britannicus clasped to her bosom, calling him her pet and darling, and the image of his dear father, and keeping him by every artifice from quitting the chamber. His sisters, Antonia and Octavia, were in like manner detained within the palace; while rumours were spread that the sufferer was reviving, and despatches sent to the guards and legions, declaring that all went well, and that the astrologers predicted his happy recovery. Thus twelve or more hours passed. On the morrow at mid-day, the thirteenth of October, the doors of the palace were suddenly thrown open, and Nero, with Burrhus at his side, walked straight to the guardhouse, at the outer gate.[1] At the prefect's word of command, he was received with acclamations, and lifted in a litter on the men's shoulders. Some indeed still hung back and murmured, *Where is Britannicus?* but there was none to bid them act for him, and they speedily

Death of Claudius and succession of Nero.

second must have been rapid indeed not to be rejected with the vomiting which immediately ensued. Suetonius gives other versions, all somewhat different, of the circumstances. *Claud.* 44. Comp. Dion, lx. 34.

[1] We may conclude from Tacitus that Claudius died soon after being carried from the supper table, about midnight of the 12th—13th; but his death was announced as taking place some hours later, and the 13th was the day stated in the Fasti. Comp. Dion, lx. 34.;

followed the first impulse which had been given them. Nero was carried to the camp; he made a suitable address, promised the expected donative, after his father's example, and was saluted imperator.[1] The senate accepted without hesitation the declared will of the prætorians; nor was there afterwards any dissent on the part of the legions in the provinces. The first act of the fathers was to decree the deification of Claudius, who was thus honourably dismissed, with the least possible delay, from the remembrance of the citizens to the pious services of his appointed Flamens. His funeral was ordered with great splendour, according to the precedent of Augustus, and the magnificence of Agrippina on the occasion was not inferior to that displayed formerly by Livia. But his will was never publicly recited; it was feared that the preference it gave to the adopted son over the actual would cause remark and dissatisfaction.[2]

Estimate of the character of Claudius.

We meet with more than one instance in the imperial history of the parents suffering for the sins of their children. We have already seen how much reason there is to believe that the hatred of the Romans to Tiberius disposed them readily to accept any calumny against Livia. Tiberius himself was hated the more for the crimes of his successor Caius; and there is ground to surmise that much of the odium which has attached to Claudius is reflected from the horror with which Nero came afterwards to be regarded. Thus did the Romans

Suet. *Claud.* 45. Seneca (*Apocol.* 2.) pretends that he did not expire till after mid-day: "Inter sextam et septimam erat:"

"Jam medium curru Phœbus diviserat orbem,
Et propior nocti fessas quatiebat habenas."

Born Aug. 1. A.U. 744, Claudius died Oct. 13. A.U. 807, aged sixty-three years, two months, and twelve days. See Clinton, *Fast. Rom.* i. 36.

[1] Suet. *Ner.* 8.; Tac. *Ann.* xii. 69.; Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xx. 8.: Dion (Xiphilin), lxi. 3.

[2] Suet. *Claud.* 45.; Tac. *l. c.*; Dion, lx. 35.

avenge themselves on the authors of the principle of hereditary succession so long unknown to their polity, and known at last so disadvantageously. Of Claudius, at least, a feeling of compassion, if not of justice, may incline us to pronounce with more indulgence than has usually been accorded to him.[1] He was an imitator, as we have seen, of Augustus, but only as the silver age might parody the golden; for the manners he sought to revive, and the sentiments he pretended to regenerate, had not been blighted by the passing tempest of civil war, but were naturally decaying from the over-ripeness of age. Nevertheless, it was honourable to admire a noble model; there was some generosity even in the attempt to rival the third founder of the state. Nor, in fact, does any period of Roman history exhibit more outward signs of vigorous and successful administration; none was more fertile in victories or produced more gallant commanders or excellent soldiers; domestic affairs were prosperously conducted; the laborious industry of the emperor himself tired out all his ministers and assistants. The senate recovered some portion of its authority, and, with authority, of courage and energy. Claudius secured respect for letters, in an age of show and sensuality, by his personal devotion to them. From some of the worst vices of his age and class he was remarkably exempt. His gluttony, if we must believe the stories told of it, was countenanced at least by many high examples; his cruelty, or rather his callous insensibility, was the result of the perverted training which made human suffering a sport to the master of a single slave, as well as to the emperor on the throne; and it was never aggravated at least by

[1] Philostratus (*in Vit. Apoll.* v. 27.) judges more mildly of him: *μετὰ γὰρ τὸν πρῶτον αὐτοκράτορα, ὑφ' οὗ τὰ Ῥωμαίων διεκοσμήθη, τυραννίδες οὕτω χαλεπαὶ ἴσχυσαν ἐπὶ πεντήκοντα ἔτη ὡς μηδὲ Κλαύδιον τὰ μέσα τούτων τρισκαίδεκα ἄρξαντα χρηστὸν δόξαι.*

wanton caprice or ungovernable passion. The contempt which has been thrown on his character and understanding has been generated, in a great degree, by the systematic fabrications of which he has been made the victim. Though flattered with a lip-worship which seems to our notions incredible, Claudius appears to have risen personally above its intoxicating vapours; we know that, in one instance at least, the fulsome adulation of a man, the most remarkable of his age for eloquence and reputed wisdom, failed to turn the course whether of his justice or his anger.

The circumstances of this adulation, and of its disappointment, it is due to the memory of Claudius to detail. We have no distinct account of the cause of Seneca's banishment, which is ascribed, by little better than a guess, to the machinations of Messalina against the friends and adherents of Julia. However this may be, we have seen with what impatience the philosopher bore it. On the occasion of the death of a brother of Polybius, he addressed a treatise from his place of exile to the still powerful freedman, such as was styled a *Consolation,* in which he set forth all the arguments which wit and friendship could suggest to alleviate his affliction and fortify his wisdom. After assuring him of the solemn truth that all men are mortal, and reminding him that this world itself, and all that it contains, is subject to the common law of dissolution; that man is born to sorrow; that the dead can have no pleasure in his grief; that his grief at the best is futile and unprofitable; he diverts him with another topic which is meant to be still more effectual. The emperor, he says, is divine, and those who are blessed by employment in his service, and have him ever before their eyes, can retain no idle interest in human things; their happy souls neither fear nor sorrow can enter;

Claudius honoured as a deity by Seneca during his lifetime.

The Consolation to Polybius.

the divinity is with them and around them.[1] *Me, he declares, this God has not overthrown; rather he has supported when others supplanted me; he still suffers me to remain for a monument of his providence and compassion. Whether my cause be really good or bad, his justice will at last pronounce it good, or his clemency will so regard it. Meanwhile, it is my comfort to behold his pardons travelling through the world: even from the corner where I am cast away his mercy has called forth many an exile before me. One day the eyes of his compassion will alight on me also. . . . . Truly those thunderbolts are just which the thunderstricken have themselves learnt to adore. May the immortals long indulge him to the world! may he rival the deeds of Augustus and exceed his years! While still resident among us, may death never cross his threshold! Distant be the day, and reserved for the tears of our grand-children, when his divine progenitors demand him for the heavens which are his own!*[2]

His adoration of Claudius proves unavailing.

Such were the phrases, sonorous and unctuously polished, which Polybius was doubtless expected to recite in the ears of the imperial pedant: standing high as he still did in the favour of Claudius and Messalina, he had the means, and was perhaps not without the will, to recommend them with all his interest, and intercede in the flatterer's behalf. Yet Claudius, it would seem, remained wholly unmoved by a worship more vehement than Ovid's, and enhanced still more by the unquestioned reputation of its author. Whatever had been the motives of his sentence against Seneca, it was not by flattery that he could be swayed to reverse it. Surely, as far as we are competent to

[1] Senec. *Cons. ad Polyb.* 31.: "Non desinam toties tibi offerre Cæsarem."

[2] Senec. *Cons. ad Polyb.* 26, 31, 32.

judge, we must think the better both of his firmness and his sense.[1] Shortly afterwards Polybius was himself subverted by the caprice of Messalina; Messalina in her turn was overthrown by Agrippina; and it was not till the sister of Julia had gained the ascendant, that Seneca obtained at her instance the grace he had vainly solicited through the good offices of the freedman.

Seneca's satire on the deification of Claudius.

But however little Claudius may have relied on the sincerity of this brilliant phrasemonger, he could scarce have anticipated the revulsion of sentiment to which so ardent a worshipper would not blush to give utterance on his decease. It was natural of course that the returned exile should attach himself to his benefactress: from her hands he had received his honours; by her he was treated with a confidence which flattered him. No doubt he was among the foremost of the courtiers who deserted the setting to adore the rising luminary. Yet few, perhaps, could believe that no sooner should Claudius be dead, ere yet the accents of official flattery had died away which proclaimed him entered upon the divine career of his ancestors, than the worshipper of the living emperor should turn his deification into ridicule, and blast his name with a slander of unparalleled ferocity. There is no more curious fragment of antiquity than the *Vision of Judgment* which Seneca has left us on the death and deification of Claudius. The traveller who has visited modern Rome in the autumn season has remarked the numbers of unwieldy and bloated gourds which sun their speckled bellies before the doors, to form a favourite condiment to the food of the poorer

[1] It should be remarked that we cannot speak with certainty of this presumed intercession of Polybius. It is possible that the Consolation did not reach him till he was no longer in a position to serve its author; but, on the other hand, there is no reason to suppose this to have been the case.

classes. When Claudius expired in the month of October, his soul, according to the satirist, long lodged in the inflated emptiness of his own swollen carcass, migrated by an easy transition into a kindred pumpkin. The senate declared that he had become a god; but Seneca knew that he was only transformed into a gourd. The senate decreed his divinity, Seneca translated it into pumpkinity; and proceeded to give a burlesque account of what may be supposed to have happened in heaven on the appearance of the new aspirant to celestial honours.[1] —A tall gray-haired figure has arrived halting at the gates of Olympus: he mops and mows, and shakes his palsied head, and when asked whence he comes and what is his business, mutters an uncouth jargon in reply which none can understand. Jupiter sends Hercules to interrogate the creature, for Hercules is a travelled god, and knows many languages; but Hercules himself, bold and valiant as he is, shudders at the sight of a strange unearthly monster, with the hoarse inarticulate moanings of a seal or sea-calf. He fancied that he saw his thirteenth labour before him. Presently, on a nearer view, he discovers that it is *a sort of man*. Accordingly he takes courage to address him with a verse from Homer, the common interpreter of gods and men; and Claudius, rejoicing at the sound of Greek, and auguring that his own histories will be understood in heaven, replies with

[1] The piece here alluded to is entitled in the MSS. and editions *Ludus de morte Claudii Cæsaris.* Its style is very similar to that of Seneca, with whose works it has been found, and in brilliancy and point it is by no means unworthy of the great master of rhetoric. It contains, indeed, no allusion to the gourd or pumpkin; but Dion tells us (lx. 35.) that Seneca wrote a satire on the deification of Claudius, to which he gave the name of *Apocolocyntosis* (or pumpkinification), and there seems no ground to doubt the identity of the two pieces. It is not uncommon in ancient literature for the same work to be cited under two names. Thus the poem of Lucan is sometimes called *Pharsalia*, sometimes *de Bello Civili.*

an apt quotation.[1] To pass over various incidents which are next related, and the gibes of the satirist on the Gaulish origin of Claudius, and his zeal in lavishing the franchise on Gauls and other barbarians, we find the gods assembled in conclave to deliberate on the pretensions of their unexpected visitor. Certain of the deities rise in their places, and express themselves with divers exquisite reasons in his favour; and his admission is about to be carried with acclamation, when Augustus starts to his feet (for the first time, as he calls them all to witness, since he became a god himself, for Augustus in heaven is reserved and silent, and keeps strictly to his own affairs), and recounts the crimes and horrors of his grandchild's career He mentions the murder of his father-in-law Silanus, and of his two sons-in-law Silanus and Pompeius, and the father-in-law of his daughter, and the mother-in-law of the same, of his wife Messalina, and of others more than can be named. The gods are struck with amazement and indignation. Claudius is repelled from the threshold of Olympus, and led by Mercury to the shades below. As he passes along the Via Sacra he witnesses the pageant of his own obsequies, and then first apprehends the fact of his decease. He hears the funeral dirge in which his actions are celebrated in most grandiloquent sing-song, descending at last to the abruptest bathos.[2] But the satirist can strike a higher note: the advent of the ghost to the infernal regions is described with a sublime irony. *Claudius is come*, shout the spirits of the dead, and at once a vast multitude assemble around him, exclaiming, with the chant of the priests of Apis, *We have found him, we have found him;*

[1] Senec. *Apocol.* 5.: τίς πόθεν εἶς ἀνδρῶν, πόθι τοι πτόλις; . . . .
'Ιλιόθεν με φέρων ἄνεμος Κικόνεσσι πέλασσεν.

[2] Senec. *Apocol.* 12.: "Ingenti μεγαληγορίᾳ nænia cantabatur anapœstis; fundite fletus, edite planctus, fingite luctus," &c.

rejoice and be glad![1] Among them was Silius the consul and Junius the prætor, and Trallus and Trogus, and Cotta, Vettius, and Fabius, Roman knights, whom Narcissus had done to death. Then came the freedmen Polybius and Myron, Harpocras, Amphæus, and Pheronactes, whom Claudius had despatched to hell before him, that he might have his ministers below. Next advanced Catonius and Rufus, the prefects, and his friends Lusius and Pedo, and Lupus and Celer, consulars, and finally a number of his own kindred, his wife and cousins, and son-in-law. *Friends everywhere!* simpered the fool; *pray how came you all here?—How came we here?* thundered Pompeius Pedo: *who sent us here but thou, O murderer of all thy friends?*[2]—And thereupon the new comer is hurried away before the judgment-seat of Æacus. An old boon companion offers to plead for him; Æacus, most just of men, forbids, and condemns the criminal, one side only heard. *As he hath done,* he

[1] Senec. *Apocol.* 13.: "Claudius Cæsar venit . . . εὑρήκαμεν, συγχαίρωμεν." Great has been the success of this remarkable passage, which may possibly have suggested the noble lines of Shakspeare, *Rich. III.* Act i. sc. 4.:

Clarence is come, false, fleeting, perjured Clarence,
That stabbed me in the field by Tewkesbury.

It is more probable that Voltaire had it in his mind when he pronounced on the fate of Constantine and Clovis; and more than one stanza of Byron's *Vision of Judgment* is evidently suggested by it. Lucan also, in almost every page of whose poem I trace the study of his uncle Seneca, seems to have had it before him in those inspired lines, *Phars.* vi. in fin.:

"Tristis felicibus umbris
Vultus erat: vidi Decios, natumque patremque,
Lustrales bellis animas, flentemque Camillum
Et Curios; Syllam de te, Fortuna, querentem . . . .
Abruptis Catilina minax fractisque catenis
Exsultant Mariique truces nudique Cethegi . . . ."

Comp. also Juvenal, ii. 153.:

"Curius quid sentit et ambo
Scipiadæ . . . . quoties hinc talis ad illos Umbra venit."

[2] For Catonius, see Dion, lx. 18.; for Junius, Rufus, and Vettius, Tac. *Ann.* xi. 35. Pompeius Pedo seems to be the same who is there called Urbicus.

exclaims, *so shall he be done by.*[1] The shades are astounded at the novelty of the judgment: to Claudius it seems rather unjust than novel. Then the nature of his punishment is considered. Some would relieve Tantalus or Ixion from their torments and make the imperial culprit take their place; but no, that would still leave him the hope of being himself in the course of ages relieved. His pains must be never ending, still beginning: eternal trifler and bungler that he was, he shall play for ever and ever with a bottomless dicebox.[2]

Seneca's extravagant flattery of Nero.

Such was the scorn which might be flung upon the head of a national divinity, even though he were the adopted father of the ruler of the state; nor perhaps was the new and upstart deity much more cavalierly treated than might sometimes be the lot of the established denizens of Olympus. It is true that Nero at a later period thought fit to degrade his parent from these excessive honours, and even demolished the unfinished works of his temple on the Cælian hill[3]: but there is no reason to suppose that Seneca reserved his spite until this catastrophe, or that the prince evinced any marks of displeasure at the unrestrained laughter with which doubtless his satire was greeted.[4] While the memory

[1] Senec. *l. c.*:

Εἴ κε πάθοι τά τ' ἔρεξε δίκη κ' ἰθεῖα γένοιτο . . . .

"Claudio iniquum magis videbatur quam novum."

[2] Senec. *l. c.* in fin.:

"Refugit digitosque per ipsos
Fallax assiduo dilabitur alea furto."

[3] Suet. *Claud.* 45.; *Vespas.* 9.

[4] Nero is said to have called mushrooms *the food of Gods*, Θεῶν βρῶμα. Suet. *Ner.* 3. The jest of Gallio, Seneca's brother, that Claudius was dragged to heaven by a hangman's hook, is conceived in a similar spirit of inhuman banter. Dion, lx. 35. Juvenal's phrase, "Tremulumque caput descendere jussit In cœlum" (vi. 623), is equally happy, and for once less coarse than either. Comp. Statius. *Sylv.* iii. 3. 77. "Nondum stelligerum senior demissus in axem Claudius."

of the deceased emperor was thus ruthlessly torn in pieces, the writer had been careful to exalt in terms the most extravagant the anticipated glories of his successor; and the vain thoughtless heir perceived not that the mockery of his sire was the deepest of insults to himself. Of the figure, accomplishments, and character of Nero I shall speak more particularly hereafter: enough that he was young, that he was not ungraceful in appearance, that he had some talents, and, above all, the talent of exhibiting them. With such qualifications the new occupant of a throne could never want for flatterers. To sing them, the sage of the rugged countenance mounts gaily on the wings of poetry, and sports in strains of mellifluous mellowness, such as might grace the erotic lyre of the most callow votary of the Muses. At last, he says, in mercy to his wretchedness, the life-thread of the stolid Claudius had been severed by the fatal shears. But Lachesis, at that moment, had taken in her hands another skein of dazzling whiteness, and as it glided nimbly through her fingers, the common wool of life was changed into a precious tissue [1]:—a golden age untwined from the spindle. The Sisters ply their work in gladness, and glory in their blessed task; and far, far away stretches the glittering thread, beyond the years of Nestor and Tithonus. Phœbus stands by their side, and sings to them as they spin,—Phœbus the god of song and the god of prophecy. *Stay not, O stay not, gentle sisters; he shall transcend the limits of human life: he shall be like me in face, like me in beauty; neither in song nor in eloquence behind me. He shall restore a blissful age to wearied men, and break again the long silence of the laws. Yes,—as when Lucifer drives the stars before him, and morning dissipates the clouds, the bright sun gazes on the world, and starts his chariot on its daily race,—so Cæsar breaks upon the*

[1] Senec. *Apocol.* 4.: "Mutatur vilis pretioso lana metallo."

earth; such is the Nero whom Rome now beholds:—beams his bright countenance with tempered rays, and glistens his fair neck beneath its floating curls.[1]

[1] Senec. *l. c.*:

"Ille mihi similis vultu, similisque decore,
Nec cantu nec voce minor; felicia lassis
Sæcula præstabit, legumque silentia rumpet . . . .
Talis Cæsar adest; talem jam Roma Neronem
Aspiciat: flagrat nitidus fulgore remisso
Vultus, et effuso cervix formosa capillo."

CHAPTER LI.

The wise and liberal policy of Claudius towards Gaul.—His measures for the suppression of Druidism.—He gives a king to the Cheruscans and withdraws the Roman armies from Germany.—Political state of Britain.—Invaded by Aulus Plautius (A. U. 796, A. D. 43).—Arrival of Claudius.—Defeat of the Trinobantes.—Further successes of Plautius and Vespasian.—Subjugation of southern Britain.—Campaigns of Ostorius Scapula against Caractacus and the Silures.—Foundation of the Colonia Camulodunum (A. U. 804, A. D. 51).—Final defeat and capture of Caractacus.—Magnanimity of Claudius.—Account of the Roman province of Britain, and the stations of the legions.—Suetonius Paullinus routs the Britons in Anglesey.—Insurrection of the Iceni under their queen Boadicea.—Camulodunum stormed and destroyed.—Slaughter of the Romans and overthrow of their establishments.—Return of Suetonius from Anglesey, and defeat of the Iceni (A. U. 814, A. D. 61).—Final pacification of southern Britain.

Before comparing with the events the presage of our sanguine philosopher, we will briefly dwell on that episode in the history of Claudius, which is to English readers the most interesting in his reign, the invasion and conquest of southern Britain. If this emperor's disposition was cautious rather than enterprising, his military policy was crowned everywhere with solid success; while in this island his own exploits, no less than those of his lieutenants, were bold and brilliant, and reflect lustre on his administration from the remotest corner of the Roman world.

Claudius by birth a Gaul.

Claudius, indeed, whenever he directly copied the example of Augustus, approached nearest to the character of a discreet and able sovereign. When he placed himself, as it were, in the capital of Gaul, and traced from that centre the lines of his policy on the frontiers, he best fulfilled

the prescriptive functions which every Roman attached to the idea of the Imperator. Born at Lugdunum, on the day when the divinity of Augustus was proclaimed officially in the province, the child of the conqueror of the Germans and the chief and patron of the Gauls, Claudius might himself deserve the appellation of Gaul almost as much as of Roman.[1] It was on this, his native soil, that he ever felt himself strongest. Gaul was the standing-point whence he loved to survey the empire; whence he derived his happiest inspirations; whence he directed his most successful measures, pacific or military. It was from the colony of Lugdunum that he extended his views to the incorporation of the Gaulish with the Roman people; from Lugdunum that he cast his mental vision across the Rhine on the one hand and the British Channel on the other, and resolved to secure both these frontiers of the empire by vigorous aggressions upon the regions beyond them. The Cock, or Gaul, says Seneca, using a play on words which eighteen centuries have rendered venerable, was bravest on his own dunghill.[2] But this jest, intended as a bitter sarcasm, expressed a sober truth. Whatever were his personal failings, the character of Claudius as a Roman emperor, representing the principle of civilization by conquest, is redeemed by the bold and intelligent spirit of his Gaulish policy.

His liberal policy towards the Gauls.

We have already remarked the liberal measures which Claudius adopted for gradually amalgamating the nations beyond the Alps with their southern conquerors. On a people so impulsive as the Gauls, these measures exercised, no

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 2.: "Lugduni, eo ipso die quo primum ara ibi Augusto dedicata est."

[2] Senec. *Apocol.* 7.: "Gallum in suo sterquilinio plurimum posse." The proverb seems to have been ancient even in the time of Seneca. But the satirist identifies him still further with the land of his nativity: "As might be expected of a Gaul," he says, "Claudius spoiled Rome."

doubt, a soothing influence, while they moulded their habits in the prescribed direction. The men who were proud to fight under one Cæsar, were assuredly not less pleased with admission to the senate by another. It would be gratifying, indeed, could we feel warranted in accepting as a sober truth the sneer of Seneca, that Claudius really meant to extend his boon of citizenship to other nations besides the Gauls; that he proposed to be the patron of the Germans, the Britons, the Iberians, and the Africans: we should rejoice to have solid ground for ascribing to him a broad and general view for the reformation of the Roman polity, the extinction of the Italian municipium in the empire of the world, rather than a mere act of bounty towards a single favoured people. But of this we have no distinct evidence. All we can say with certainty is that he threw open the gates of Rome to the inhabitants of Gaul, and applied the principles of the first Cæsar with the frankness not unworthy of that bold emancipator. If it were not the first step taken by the emperors in that happy direction, neither, it was evident, could it be the last.

Disgust and suspicion with which the Romans regarded Druidism.

Claudius, however, it may be affirmed with certainty, had a special motive besides personal partiality, for this favour to the Gauls. No people within the circuit of Roman dominion more required at this moment to be conciliated; none held within its bosom such dangerous elements of disaffection. Under Tiberius a serious revolt had been quelled by a statesman's firm resolution. Under Caius the germ of a civil war had been extinguished, as it appears, by the happy boldness of a madman. But whenever disturbances should again rise, whether from discontent among the natives, or from the irregular ambition of a Roman official, there existed in the deep-rooted influence of the Druids, and the wide ramifications of their system, still alive though proscribed and persecuted, the

seeds of a violent outbreak of Celtic nationality. With the scanty knowledge we possess of the real character and history of Druidism, we have no means of testing the vague notions entertained by the Romans themselves of the extent to which its authority prevailed. If indeed we may believe their representations, that singular form of priestcraft was recognised at this period throughout wider regions than perhaps any other creed of Paganism. Its centre was in the north of Gaul, at Dreux, or Chartres, or Autun; but its most illustrious fanes were to be sought on the coasts of Britanny, in the sacred islands off the mouth of the Loire; in the temples of Stonehenge or Abury in our own country; in the Isle of Anglesey and possibly also of Man.[1] From the shores of the Gulf of Lyons to the Firth of Clyde a common system of usage and ceremonial attested the identity of the Druidism of the Gauls and Britons. It was among the Britons, indeed, as we are told, that the system was taught in its greatest purity; and such was the facility of communication between the two great members of the Celtic family, that the youth of Gaul constantly crossed the Channel to seek the highest instruction in its tenets. In Gaul the Roman ruler sought to modify and control this dangerous antagonist by assuring the natives that their religion was merely another form of the Greek and Italian polytheism[2]: to them Druidism was officially

[1] The silence of the Roman authorities on Stonehenge and the other presumed Druidical monuments of Britain is no doubt remarkable; yet it seems extravagant to suppose, with some modern theorists, that they are posterior to the Roman period. They are first referred to by Henry of Huntingdon, early in the twelfth century, as then of unfathomed antiquity, and they form, unquestionably, part of a common system of monumental structures, scattered from Carnac in Britanny through a great part of northern and central Europe.

[2] Lucan, i. 450.:—

"Et vos barbaricos ritus moremque sinistrum
Sacrorum, Druidæ, positis repetistis ab armis:
Solis nosse Deos et cœli numina vobis,
Aut solis nescire datum est."

declared to be a special modification of truths common to the wisest and most advanced nations of antiquity. But the fear with which he really regarded it, as an implacable enemy, an inspired rival, was betrayed by the dark colours he allowed to be thrown over it at home. The bondage in which it kept the minds of its subjects, the atrocity of its human sacrifices, the daring falsehood of its promise of immortality, were exposed to the disgust and contempt of the votaries of Olympus. Its rites were barbarous; its ceremonies were sinister and gloomy. The priests alone, it was averred, pretended in their pride to the occult science which apprehends, or rather misapprehends, the Gods.[1] The horrors of the sacred groves, on which no birds alighted, in which no breezes rustled, their scarred and leafless trunks, their bloody altar stumps, the dripping of their black fountains, the mutterings of their riven caves, the ghastly visages of their shapeless idols, were enhanced with all the art of poetic colouring, and contrasted with the graceful forms of Nymphs and Dryads in their fair retreats, with the frank and cheerful character of the southern religions, the faith of innocence, mirth, and trust. Amidst the importunate doubts and fears regarding the future, or rather in the despair of another life which Paganism now generally acknowledged, the Roman was exasperated at the Druid's assertion of the transmigration of souls. *Yet happy*, he exclaimed in the bitterness of his spirit, *were the Gauls*

[1] Lucan, iii. 399.:—

"Lucus erat longo nunquam violatus ab ævo . . . .
Hunc non ruricolæ Panes, nemorumque potentes
Sylvani Nymphæque tenent: sed barbara ritu
Sacra deum, structæ sacris feralibus aræ,
Omnis et humanis lustrata cruoribus arbos . . . . .
Illis et volucres metuunt insistere ramis
Et lustris recubare feræ; nec ventus in illas
Incubuit sylvas . . . . . Tum plurima nigris
Fontibus unda cadit . . . . . Jam fama ferebat
Sæpe cavas motu terræ mugire cavernas . . . .

and Britons in their error, insensible as it made them to the greatest of all fears, the fear of death: in this faith they rushed gaily and recklessly on the sword; their generous souls disdaining to spare the life so soon to be recovered.[1]

Proscription of Druidism by Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius.

Augustus, at the same time that he offered his own divinity as an object of worship to the Gauls at Lugdunum, had forbidden the exercise of Druidical rites in Rome. Henceforth the fierce and gloomy superstition of the North was branded as impious and immoral, hurtful to the manners of the citizens who might be tempted to mingle in it, and even to the public safety. But Augustus had not ventured to prohibit the natives of the transalpine provinces from using their ancient rights on their own soil. Tiberius seems to have pressed on the hostile system with a still stronger hand: the revolt of the Æduans and of Sacrovir, who, as we have seen, was probably himself a Druid, may have exasperated his enmity.[2] It was reserved, however, for Claudius to decree its entire abolition, and to enforce with severity the edict of proscription. Of the measures, indeed, which he took, and the details of his persecution, we have no information: a single anecdote preserved by Pliny seems to show that, in Rome, at least it was searching and sanguinary. A Gaulish chief, he tells us, a

[1] Lucan, i. 460.:—

"Felices errore suo quos ille timorum
Maximus haud urget leti metus: inde ruendi
In ferrum mens prona viris, animæque capaces
Mortis, et ignavum rediturae parcere vitæ."

[2] Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxx. 4.: "Tiberii Cæsaris principatus sustulit Druidas, et hoc genus vatum medicorumque." Some have supposed that Pliny has made a mistake, or that he means Tiberius Claudius: it seems more likely that he refers to a partial proscription of Druidism by the successor of Augustus. Strabo (iv. 4. p. 198.) had spoken under the second principate of the diligence of the Romans in abolishing the worst atrocities of the Celtic cults.

Vocontian of the Narbonensis, who had obtained Roman knighthood, was delivered to the executioner because on his coming to Rome on private business, the Druid's talisman called the serpent's egg was discovered upon his person.[1] The jealousy of the government and the curious interest of the people were most excited, perhaps, by the magical powers claimed by the priests of Gaul, and the prophetic pretensions of its bards.

Claudius gives a king to the Cheruscans.

While these harsh measures for crushing the national spirit of the Gauls, and extirpating their leaders, were in course of execution, the Roman government was not less anxious to advance the eagles beyond their frontiers, and remove from their borders the dangerous spectacle of freedom. On the side of Germany, indeed, the dominion of the conquerors had long been prepared by artifice more sure than arms. After the execution of Gætulicus, the legions, which he had debauched, had been exercised by his successor, Galba, in some desultory operations against the Chatti; but generally the peace of the frontiers had been preserved, while the Germans were rapidly assimilating themselves to the manners of their more powerful and civilised neighbours. Since the death of Arminius, the Cheruscans, once so formidable, had been greatly enfeebled by internal anarchy. At length, unable to govern themselves, they solicited a chief from the emperor. The son of Flavius, the brother of Arminius, had been educated at Rome, in the civilization of the South, with a view, no doubt, to future service. The Cheruscans were willing to accept a kinsman of their late hero: Claudius seized the opportunity for advancing his own views; and the youth went forth

[1] Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxix. 3. The serpent's egg (ovum anguinum) seems to have been an echinite or other fossil substance, to which the Druids ascribed a mysterious origin, and not less mysterious virtues. It was worn round the neck as an amulet.

from the school of monarchy, the first foreigner, as the emperor reminded him, who, born at Rome, a citizen and not a captive or a hostage, had been raised by Roman hands to an independent sovereignty. Italicus, such was the name the German adopted, had been trained to the skilful use both of the Roman and the German weapons; beneath the varnish of Italian cultivation he retained some also of the coarse tastes of his ancient countrymen; and he seems to have possessed popular manners, which for a time ingratiated him with the jealous barbarians. But presently offence was given; suspicions and enmities arose; the charge of Roman manners was promptly made against him, and connected with the imputation of foreign inclinations, and a disposition to sacrifice to the stranger the weal of the fatherland. It was in vain, urged his enemies, that he boasted himself the nephew of Arminius the patriot: was he not the son of Flavius the renegade? Italicus, on the other hand, reminded the disaffected that he had come among them at their own invitation, and challenged his enemies to decide by arms whether he deserved by his prowess to claim kinship with their bravest champion. He succeeded, after some vicissitudes, in putting down the open attempts to unseat him; but the Cheruscans continued, under his rule, to be disturbed by dissensions, to the advantage of the Romans, who looked on complacently, and abstained from interfering.[1]

Campaign of Corbulo in Germany.

Meanwhile the Chauci, who had formed a closer connexion with Rome, and had profited for many years by their state of peaceful dependence, which gave an opening to their commerce with Gaul and Britain, had ventured, at the instigation of a piratical chief named Gennascus, to seek plunder by incursions into the lower German

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 16, 17.

province. Sanquinius, the commander in this quarter, had recently died, and the defence of the district was for a time neglected. This man was succeeded, however, by Domitius Corbulo, an active and enterprising soldier, who promptly restored discipline in the camps, repaired the flotilla of the Rhine and ocean, and pursued the depredators into all their harbours. He chastised the Frisii, who had dared to withhold their stipulated tribute; and, without actually annexing their country to the Roman dominions, planted among them a government of the friends and clients of the empire, supported by the presence of a military force. At the same time he sought to subdue the Chauci by corrupting some of their chiefs, and by the murder of Gennascus, towards whom, as a mere pirate, no terms of honour need be kept. This attempt on the outlaw's life was indeed successful; nevertheless, the result was not so propitious as Corbulo had anticipated. The Chauci, long wavering
A. D. 47. A. U. 800. in their dependence, were decided against Rome by irritation at this treacherous dealing, and flew to arms with frantic ardour. Possibly this was what Corbulo desired; he had scattered with his own hand the seed of rebellion, the crop had ripened, and he was about to reap the harvest. But he had worse enemies at the court of Claudius than the Chauci on the Rhine. He was there represented as seeking war for his own aggrandisement. If he failed, the empire would suffer; if he triumphed, the emperor himself might find him dangerous. Such were the insinuations, it was alleged, by which the timid prince was induced to stop the progress of conquest in Germany, and recall his standards behind the Rhine. But Claudius doubtless knew that peace was now a more effective auxiliary than war; and he preferred holding out the hand of treacherous friendship to engaging in superfluous hostilities. The order to retire reached Corbulo when he was actually planting

a camp in the territory of the Chauci for the site of a fortress, or a colony. He read in it the danger to which he was exposed from the emperor's jealousy; the contempt in which he should be held by the arrogant barbarians, the mockery to which he should be subjected even from his own allies. Nevertheless, with the old Roman endurance, he stifled every sign of anger or murmur of remonstrance; and muttering only, *how fortunate were once the Roman captains*, gave the signal for retreat. With the withdrawal of the legions, the Chauci relapsed into their fatal torpor. It was necessary, however, to furnish the soldiers with employment; and, forbidden to exercise them in war, Corbulo now engaged them in a great work of engineering, which has long outlasted the conquests of Rome beyond the Rhine. He cut a canal from the Maas, near its mouth, to the northern branch of the Rhine parallel to the line of coast, to effect an easy communication between his stations, in a region where the yielding soil could scarce bear the weight of a military causeway, to drain at the same time the lowlands, and oppose dykes to the encroachment of the ocean.[1] Before the adoption of the modern railroad, the canal of Corbulo was the common highway of traffic between Rotterdam and Leyden; and its plodding trekschuyt may still faithfully represent the old Roman tow-boat of the Pomptine marshes.[2]

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xi. 18—20. "This great work still forms a principal drain of the province of Holland, between the city of Leyden and the village of Sluys on the Maas."—Greenwood, *Hist. of the Germans*, i. 141

[2] Comp. Horace's *Journey to Brundisium*. A more important work of this kind was projected about the year 812 by L. Vetus, a Roman commander in northern Gaul. He proposed to unite the Saone and Moselle by a canal, to expedite the transmission of troops from the South; but was dissuaded from the enterprise by Ælius Gracilis, the legatus of the Belgic province, as likely to bring him into suspicion with the emperor. Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 53. Steininger (*Gesch. der Treverer*, p. 86.) laments, that up to this day so useful a work should have been neglected, though it presents no great difficulties.

The religion of the Germans was distinct from that of the Gauls; and from this reason, perhaps, as well as from the long animosity between the two nations, the Romans were less apprehensive of the effect which might be produced on the one bank by the view of surviving independence on the other. But with the island of Britain, more distant yet not remote, the case was different. Though the Channel was a broader barrier than the Rhine, the communication of ideas, of hopes, fears, and enmities, was more close and constant between the Gauls and Britons than between the Gauls and Germans. There was nearer affinity in blood, language, and manners; there were no recollections of mutual hostility; no memorials on either side of conquest or encroachment; above all, Druidism was paramount among both, and the ministers of the Gallic rites looked to the sacred recesses of the northern island as the real hearth and home of their own religious polity. The persecution of the Druids on the continent drove them back to the spot where they had imbibed their own mystic lore; and the recital of their wrongs inflamed the indignation of the children of that heroic race which could boast that it had repulsed the mighty Cæsar with disaster from its shores.[1]

The Romans more jealous of freedom in Britain than in Germany.

The tribute which Julius Cæsar had pretended to impose on some chiefs of southern Britain had been rarely offered, and never exacted. Augustus, we have seen, had once threatened to recover it in person by force of arms: it is possible that some slight concessions then made to his demands

Relation of Britain with the continent.

[1] Names, indeed, of Gaulish tribes and those possibly of German origin, may be noticed in the south-eastern parts of Britain, but there is no record of a hostile invasion, no allusion to hostile reminiscences; and the existence of Druidical remains on the very spots where these tribes were seated speaks in favour of their actual affinity to the original stock.

suffice to divert him from an enterprise he had no real desire to undertake.[1] Under Tiberius the affairs of Britain excited no political interest at Rome. But the rapid progress of Roman civilization in northern Gaul, the growth of the cities on the banks of the teeming Rhine-stream, the spread of commercial relations along the shores of Belgium, Holland, and Friesland, had elicited a spirit of friendly intercourse from the British side of the ocean. Londinium, a city which escaped the notice of Cæsar, had become in the time of Claudius a great emporium of trade. Camulodunum was the residence of the chief potentate of southern Britain; the fertile plains of our eastern provinces were studded with numerous towns and villages: the vessels of the Thames, the Colne, and the Wensum reciprocated traffic with those of the Rhine, the Maas, and the Scheldt: the coinage of Cunobelinus, king of the Trinobantes, of which specimens still exist, attests, by its skilful workmanship and its Latin legends, an intimate and friendly connexion between Britain and Gaul, or possibly Italy.[2] We may conjecture, that the Romans themselves, in the interval since the invasion of Cæsar, had settled as traders in our island.

[1] My attention has been directed to a fragment of Livy recently produced by Schneidewin, from which it would appear that Augustus actually set foot in Britain: "Cæsar Augustus populo Romano nuntiat, regressus a Britannia insula, totum orbem terrarum tam bello quam amicitia Romano imperio subditum." The passage seems to be a fragment of an epitome, and is probably not strictly faithful to the sense of the author. See *The Christian Reformer* for Jan. 1857, p. 7. Suetonius (*Claud.* 16.) and Eutropius (vii. 13.) say expressly that no Roman set foot in Britain from Julius Cæsar to Claudius.

[2] In the time of Cæsar, according to his own account, the Britons had no coinage, and used only rude pieces of iron by weight. Eckhel expresses some doubt of the genuineness of the few British coins which were known in his day. Their number, however, has now been greatly increased, and modern numismatists have assiduously collected and catalogued them. I am informed that they are generally rather coarse imitations of Macedonian types, derived, no doubt, from Gaul and Massilia.

Chief states of southern Britain: the Trinobantes, the Regni, and the Iceni.

The south-eastern parts of Britain seem to have been occupied at this period by three principal nations, the Regni in Sussex, the Trinobantes in Hertford and Essex, the Iceni in Norfolk and Suffolk. The Trinobantes were already known as the most powerful of the British tribes in the time of Cæsar. Their leader, Cassivellaunus, had assumed the direction of a league against the invader. His authority had been still further extended by his successors. If we may believe that the great system of roads, to which we give the name of British, was actually the work of our Celtic ancestors, extending as they do across the length and breadth of the island from Richborough to the Menai Straits, from the mouth of the Axe to the Wash and Humber, it would seem to indicate that there was once a time when the whole of south Britain at least was subject to some common authority. Of such a political combination, however, there is certainly no trace in history: possibly the union extended only to matters of religion.[1] Cunobelinus indeed, the greatest of the descendants of Cassivellaunus, seems to have united a large part of the

[1] Cæsar describes the Britons as in a state of barbarism, which completely disappears in the accounts of Tacitus and Dion. We hear no more now of their painted bodies, their scythed chariots, their hideous sacrifices, their revolting concubinage. Can we suppose that Cæsar was willing to represent the country, which he found it inconvenient to subdue, as more miserable than it really was? Or could the hundred years of intercourse, which had since intervened, with the pacified tribes of Gaul and Germany, have effected so remarkable a change? The existence of a common system of roads throughout the country, which is admitted by some of the best modern antiquarians, seems a strong proof of a common civilization. These lines of road do not correspond with the Roman Itineraries; and some of them, as those which lead from Seaton to Yarmouth, and from Southampton to Richborough, do not seem to belong to a Roman system. They point to a native traffic, carried on by land and water, between Armorica and the Frisian or Danish coasts. But if not Roman, there is no later period of an united Britain to which they can well be ascribed.

island under his control or influence. From his capital at Camulodunum, near the mouth of the Colne in Essex, to which he had transferred the royal residence from Verulamium, for the advantage perhaps of intercourse with Gaul and Germany, he extended his sway over the south and centre of Britain, and may possibly have been recognised as paramount in arms by the pure Celtic races on the Severn, and even beyond it. The people of Kent and Sussex may also, in some sense, have acknowledged his sovereignty. But the Iceni were independent, jealous, and perhaps hostile to him. To this nation also a number of petty tribes were subservient, extending across the centre of the island from the Wash to the Avon and Severn. Between the Romans and these proud and self-confident islanders, causes of quarrel were never wanting; it only remained for the southern conquerors hovering on their coasts, and mingling in all their dealings, to choose their own moment for aggression. The petty chiefs who chanced to be expelled from their own country by domestic dissensions, generally sought a refuge, which was never denied them, within the Roman dominions, and the kings of the Trinobantes or Iceni sometimes ventured to demand that they should be surrendered. On the other hand, the fugitives were constantly urging the Roman government to restore them by arms or influence to their forfeited rights at home, and holding out splendid promises of tribute and submission in return. Between these two classes of applicants the Romans would not long hesitate. When Adminius, one of the sons of Cunobelin, solicited Caius to recover for him his share in the paternal inheritance, the emperor prepared, as we have seen, to enforce his claims with a military demonstration. The threatened invasion was, however, postponed, whether its ostensible object were gained or not. Of Adminius and his pretensions we

hear no more; but other fugitives and other claimants soon appeared upon the scene.

Claudius prepares for the invasion of Britain.

The solicitations of Bericus to Claudius were the counterpart to those of Adminius to his predecessor, though of this suppliant we know even less than of the former. But he too was a chief expatriated by domestic enemies, he too was demanded in extradition by his countrymen, but retained by the policy rather than the compassion of the Romans; he too succeeded in getting a Roman army equipped for his restoration.[1] Claudius could assert, like Augustus before him, that the tribute of Britain had been long withheld. Like Augustus, he was determined to chastise the defaulters, and take firmer sureties than before for future submission. Like Augustus, he proposed to lead the eagles in person, to earn a title and a triumph, as his ancestors had done, on the field of battle. But he could not spare the time, he would not perhaps encounter the toil, required for the conquest of the powerful islanders. Aulus Plautius, who held a high command in Gaul, was chosen to conduct the invasion, and prepare the way for the emperor by a preliminary campaign in the year of the city 796. It was now about a hundred years since the epoch of Cæsar's first descent on Britain. The futile and almost ignominious result of that attempt was still remembered among the legions of the northern provinces. The storms and shoals of the ocean had since then caused more than one disaster to their arms. The inhospitable character of the natives of either coast had more than once been proved,[2] and when Plautius announced to his

A. D. 43.
A. U. 796.

[1] Dion, lx. 19. This Bericus may probably have been the Veric of some British coins.

[2] Hor. *Od.* iii. 3.: "Visam Britannos hospitibus feros." Yet the British chiefs had sent back the shipwrecked sailors of Germanicus (Tac. *Ann.* ii. 24.). These men, however, brought home a terrific

soldiers the service they were destined for, they refused to follow his standards, and broke out into murmurs and even mutiny. Plautius reported the condition of his camp to Rome. The Emperor, bent on his purpose, determined to enforce discipline. He sent Narcissus to the camp, to bring the turbulent legionaries to obedience. They received him with cries of *Io Saturnalia!* mocking the arrogant freedman as a slave who ventured to assume the character of his master. But, satisfied with their jest, they seem to have returned at last of their own accord to their duty, and submitted to their chief's commands.

Four legions, the Second, the Ninth, the Fourteenth and the Twentieth, all noted afterwards in British history, were selected for this distant adventure. Plautius, we are told, arrayed his forces in three divisions, to which he assigned different places of landing, in order to baffle the defence, and secure a footing in one quarter, if repulsed in another. I shall have occasion to show how little reliance can be placed on the details of this expedition, meagre as they are, recorded by Dion only; we have, however, no choice but to relate them as they have been reported, and point out their inconsistency as we proceed. The ships encountered adverse weather, and were more than once driven back; but the appearance of a meteor, which shot from east to west, restored the courage of the soldiers, by following the direction in which they were bound. It would seem then that their course lay from the Belgian roadsteads on either side the Itian promontory, to the British above and below the South Foreland; from the ship-builders' creeks at the efflux of the Aa and the Liane to the havens or low accessible beaches of Richborough, Dover and

Aulus Plautius invades Britain.

account of the sea and land monsters they had encountered. Moreover, the poverty of the unclad islanders was still remembered in the traditions of the camps.

Lymne. Whatever were the points at which they came to land, they seemed to have encountered no resistance. Soon afterwards we shall find the Regni in friendly relations with the Romans, and it is possible that the invaders had already tampered with their fidelity to the common cause, and engaged their influence over the coast of Kent and Sussex. It was reported, however, that the natives had been lulled into false security by the rumours sedulously wafted from Gaul of the disaffection of the legions, and neglected in consequence the measures necessary for opposing their disembarkation.[1]

Successes of Plautius and his lieutenant Vespasianus.

The sons of the great Cunobelin, Caractacus and Togodumnus, wielded the forces of the Trinobantes and held a primacy of rank and power among the chiefs of South Britain. Like their ancestor Cassivellaun, and following the usual tactics of their German neighbours, they abstained from meeting the invader in the field, and ensconced themselves in the forests, or behind the rivers, where he could only attack them at a disadvantage. Plautius, however, pushed boldly forward, worsted both princes in succession, and received the submission of some clans of the Boduni, as they are called by Dion, the same, it is generally supposed, as the Dobuni of Ptolemy, the inhabitants of modern Gloucestershire.[2] Placing a garrison in this district, he advanced to the banks of a broad river, which the Britons deemed impassable; but a squadron of Batavian cavalry, trained to swim the Rhine and Wahal, dashed boldly across it, and dislodged them from their position by striking at the horses which drew their chariots. A force under Flavius Vespasianus penetrated into the unknown regions beyond, and obtained, not without great hazards, some further successes. Such was the command in which this

[1] Dion, lx. 19.
[2] Ptol. *Geogr.* ii. 3. 25, 28. Smith's *Dict. of Class. Geography.*

brave and strenuous captain was first *shown to the Fates*, which from henceforth destined him for empire.[1] His empire and his dynasty soon passed away; but Providence designed him for its instrument in a work of wider and more lasting interest. On the plains of Britain Vespasian learnt the art of war, which he was to practise among the defiles of Palestine, and against the despair and fury of the Jews.

Not probable that Plautius crossed the Severn.

From the mention of the Boduni or Dobuni it is natural to suppose that the broad stream above mentioned was the Severn near its mouth. Yet it is difficult to imagine that Plautius can have advanced so far into the country in the few weeks since his landing, and the language of Dion seems presently to contradict it. The defeated Britons, says this writer, retired to the Thames, and placed that river between themselves and the Romans in the lowest portion of its course, where it swells to a great breadth with the tidal waters of the ocean. The invaders, he continues, attempting to follow them, fell, in their ignorance of the ground, into great danger: but again the Batavians swam their horses across the river, and the barbarians were routed once more with much slaughter. In this battle Togodumnus was slain: Caractacus had perhaps retired to the West, where we shall meet with him again. A few only of the Romans were lost in the pursuit among the marshes.[2]

He awaits the arrival of Claudius on the north bank of the Thames.

Plautius, it would seem, now for the first time firmly planted himself on the north bank of the Thames. It is impossible to suppose that if he had once reached the Severn, he would have again fallen back behind a barrier which he must have already crossed or doubled. Nor, as I have said, is there time allowed for such distant operations. For he now sent to summon

[1] Tac. *Agric.* 13.: "Monstratus fatis Vespasianus."
[2] Dion, lx. 20.

Claudius to pass over into Britain, and assist personally in the final reduction of the twice broken Trinobantes. He awaited behind his entrenchments his chief's arrival. Claudius made his appearance before the end of the military season. I can discover no river that will answer the description of the historian, except the Medway; and if any reliance is to be placed on the terms in which Dion expresses himself, we must believe that instead of traversing half the island unopposed, Plautius first met the Britons in the neighbourhood of Maidstone or Rochester. The three divisions of his army may have converged from the three most frequented of the Kentish ports, at Canterbury. But it is better to confess the impossibility of tracing his movements. Dion is throughout very indistinct in his conception of British history and geography, and when Tacitus himself comes to our aid, we shall find his knowledge also slender and superficial.

Claudius enters Britain in person and subdues the Trinobantes.

Plautius had been instructed to call the emperor to his assistance, if difficulties should occur that deserved his august interference. The legatus was perhaps courtier enough to divine his master's wishes, and to represent the state of affairs according to his desire. Claudius held himself ready for the expected summons, and there can have been no delay in his reply to it. Perhaps he had already gone forth to meet it. Leaving the conduct of affairs at home to Vitellius, his colleague in the consulship, he proceeded by the route of Ostia and Massilia, attended by a retinue of officers and soldiers, and a train of elephants already bespoken for the service. His resolution was tried by adverse winds, which twice drove him back, not without peril, from the coast of Gaul.[1] When at last he landed, his course was directed partly along the

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 17.

military roads, partly by the convenient channels of the navigable rivers, till he reached the coasts of the British sea. At Gessoriacum he embarked for the opposite shores of Cantium, and speedily reached the legions in their encampment beyond the Thames. The soldiers, long held in the leash in expectation of his arrival, were eager to spring upon the foe. With the emperor himself at their head, a spectacle not beheld since the days of the valiant Julius, they traversed the level plains of the Trinobantes, which afforded no defensible position, till the natives were compelled to stand at bay before the stockades which encircled their capital Camulodunum. It is not perhaps too bold a conjecture that the lines which can still be traced from the Colne to a little wooded stream called the Roman river, drawn across the approach to a tract of twenty or thirty square miles surrounded on every other side by water, indicate the ramparts of this British oppidum.[1] Within this inclosed space there was ample room not only for the palace of the chief and the cabins of his people, but for the grazing land of their flocks and herds in seasons of foreign attack; while, resting on the sea in its rear, it commanded the means of reinforcement and, if necessary, of flight. But the fate of the capital was decided by the issue of the encounter which took place before it. The Trinobantes were routed. They surrendered their city, and, with it, their national freedom and independence. The victory was complete: the subjection of the enemy assured: within sixteen days from his landing in Britain, Claudius

[1] These lines have a fosse traceable on their *western* side; they were therefore defences against attack from the land, not from the sea. At one or two points they are strengthened by small rectangular castella, which may be later Roman additions; and it is difficult to point out any other period of our history when the defence of the little peninsula on which Colchester stands could have given occasion to works of this nature. It is asserted, moreover, that British coins have been found in these works.

had broken a powerful kingdom, and accomplished a substantial conquest. He left it to Plautius to secure by the usual methods the fruits of this signal success, and returned himself immediately to Rome, from which he had not been absent more than six months altogether.[1]

Claudius triumphs at Rome.

Claudius had gained a victory: some indeed were found to assert in after times that the foe had never met him in the field, and had yielded city and country without a blow: but his soldiers undoubtedly had hailed him repeatedly, in the short space of sixteen days, with the title of Imperator, and he was qualified by the purport of his laurelled despatches to claim the crowning honour of a triumph as the meed of conduct and valour. We have seen already how the senate hastened to decree him this distinction; how he received the appellation of Britannicus; how arches crowned with trophies were erected to him in Rome and at Gessoriacum; how, finally, he deprecated the evil eye of Nemesis by an act of ungainly humiliation. Cheap and frivolous as these honours now were, the conquests of Claudius were really solid and extensive, and, with due precaution on the part of his lieutenants, might have been firmly established from that moment. They were soon destined, indeed, to suffer a grave disaster: but this, which broke for a moment the steady current of victory, served only to apprise the conquerors of the real condition of their position, and compel them to complete the unfinished work of

[1] Dion, lx. 21. Suetonius (*Claud.* 17.) declares that the conquest was bloodless: "Sine ullo prælio aut sanguine intra paucissimos dies parte insulæ in deditionem recepta sexto quam profectus erat mense Romam rediit, triumphavitque.' He evidently wishes to disparage the emperor's exploit as unworthy of a triumph. At a later period it was not less extravagantly magnified. Orosius says of Claudius: "Orcadas etiam insulas ultra Britanniam in Oceano positas Romano adjecit imperio" (vii. 5.).

subjugation, and settle at once the fate of Britain for four hundred years.[1]

Vespasian's advance into the West.

It seems not impossible that the prompt submission of the Trinobantes in the East was caused by the retreat of the main forces of the nation westward; for it is in the western parts of the island that we next hear of the operations of the invaders, and the chief who most obstinately resists them is still the Trinobantine Caractacus. Vespasianus, whose deserts have already been mentioned, attracted the notice of the emperor during his brief visit to the camp. He was now sent in command of the second legion to reduce the Belgæ and Damnonii, who occupied the south-western regions from the Solent to the Axe, and from the Axe to the Tamar or the Land's End. From the Isle of Wight, the Vectis of the Romans, to the rugged barrier of Dartmoor Forest, he engaged them in thirty battles.

[1] The high estimation in which the exploits of Claudius were held appears from the inscription (imperfect and conjecturally supplied) upon his arch of triumph—

TI. CLAUdio Drusi f. Cæsari
AUGUsto Germanico Pio
PONTIFICI Max. Trib. pot. ix.
COS. V. IMperatori xvi. pat. patriæ
SENATUS POPUlusque Rom. quod
REGES BRITanniæ perduelles sine
ULLA JACTUra celeriter ceperit (?)
GENTESQ extremarum Orcadum (?)
PRIMUS INDICIO facto R. imperio adjecerit (?)

See Bunsen's *Rom.* iii. 3. p. 91.; Orell. *Inscr.* 715.; and compare the lines in Seneca's *Medea*, which the moderns have regarded as a prophecy, but may really have been meant to indicate a recent event in history:

"Venient annis sæcula seris
Quibus Oceanus vincula rerum
Laxet, et ingens pateat tellus,
Tiphysque novos detegat orbes,
Nec sit terris ultima Thule."

Compare again:

"Parcite, O Divi, veniam precamur,
Vivat ut tutus mare qui subegit."

See the preface of Lipsius to his edition of Seneca's works. These passages would be more interesting could we feel more confidence in their presumed authorship.

Many a fosse and mound, many a tumulus of heroes' bones, on the hills of Wilts and Dorset, still bears silent testimony to these obscure and nameless combats; and the narrow gorge of the Teign, deeply scarred with alternately round and square entrenchments, was the scene, perhaps, of the last desperate struggles for the garden of Britain.[1]

Subjugation of the Regni and cowardly submission of the Iceni.

It may be conjectured that the conquest of this part of the island was facilitated by the cowardice or treachery of the people of the East. Cogidubnus, king of the Regni, acknowledged himself a vassal of the Romans, and consented to be their instrument for the enslavement of his countrymen. He attached himself as a client to the emperor, and assumed the name of Tiberius Claudius.[2] The Iceni, also, instead of uniting with the Trinobantes in the defence of their common freedom, appear to have yielded without a blow to the influence of the invaders. From their position on the eastern coast, and their habits of intercourse with the Roman traders of the Rhine and Scheldt, they may have learnt already to tremble at the power of the conquerors, or to covet their luxuries. As far, therefore, as their authority extended to the wild forests of the interior, and possibly even to the coast

[1] Tac. *Hist.* iii. 44.; *Agric.* 13, 14. Eutropius gives the number of thirty-two battles. Suet. (*Vespas.* 4.): "Duas validissimas gentes, superque viginti oppida, et insulam Vectem, Britanniæ proximam, in ditionem redegit." In extending the operations westward of the Isle of Wight I indulge only in conjecture; but the numerous coins of Claudius which have been found at Isca Damnoniorum, or Exeter (see Shortt's *Isca Antiqua*), indicate a very early occupation of this distant position. Isca may still have retained the importance it evidently once possessed as the emporium of the Mediterranean tin trade. Coins of the Greek dynasties of Syria and Egypt have been found there in great abundance.

[2] Tac. *Agric.* 14.: "Quædam civitates Cogidubno Regi donatæ (is ad nostram usque memoriam fidissimus mansit) vetere ac jam pridem recepta populi Romani consuetudine, ut haberet instrumenta servitutis et Reges." The name of Tiberius Claudius Cogidubnus is preserved in the curious inscription at Chichester

of the Irish Sea, they seem to have retained the native tribes in stolid inactivity, while their neighbours were successively robbed of independence. Their king Prasutagus, blindly rejoicing in the downfal of the chiefs of Camulodunum, opened his own strongholds to the visits of Roman officials, and allowed himself insensibly to fall under the tutelage of tribunes and quæstors. His offer of a small tribute, in acknowledgment of deference or subjection to Rome, was soon made a pretext for vexatious impositions; and the encroachments thus hazarded on the liberties of his people goaded them at last to resistance and insurrection.[1]

Campaign of Ostorius Scapula. A. D. 47. A. U. 800.

Plautius was recalled to Rome, to enjoy the reward of his services, in the year 800. His successor Ostorius Scapula found himself on his arrival beset by the refractory Britons in various quarters, and putting his forces at once in marching order, aimed a severe blow in the direction from which the annoyance seemed chiefly to proceed. In order to confine the still unconquered tribes within the boundary of the Severn, he drew a double line of posts along the course of that river and the Avon, into the heart of the island.[2] This last measure, perhaps, roused the jealousy of the Iceni, or inflamed

[1] There can be no doubt that Frisians, Saxons, and Danes had settled on the eastern coasts of Britain before the Roman invasion. It seems probable that the Anglican character of the population of Norfolk and Suffolk dates from the pre-Roman period. Hence we might account for the want of union between the Iceni and the Trinobantes. The name Iceni is still evidently retained in many localities of their district, as in Icknield, Ickworth, Exning, &c., and has certainly a Teutonic sound. It has been suggested that, though written by the Greeks Ἰκηνοί, the second syllable, which disappears in all these words, was probably short.

[2] The ground on which we tread here, following the general consent of our critics from Camden downwards, is most uncertain. Neither the names nor the construction can be made out clearly from the MSS. of Tacitus. Ritter reads: "Cunctaque castris Avonam usque et Sabrinam fluvios cohibere parat." Tac. *Ann.* xii. 31.

their discontent. It seems to have trenched on some rights of sovereignty exercised by them in those parts, and threatened to overawe them, faithful as they had proved themselves, no less than the turbulent barbarians of the West. They flew suddenly to arms, suffered a severe defeat, and again relapsed into a state of sullen submission. Peace being thus restored in his rear, Ostorius had leisure to penetrate into the country of the Cangi, a tribe which our antiquaries have commonly placed in the furthest corner of Carnarvonshire, the promontory or peninsula of the Cangani.[1] There is not much, indeed, to support this bold conjecture: nevertheless, wherever the true locality is to be sought, the relations of the Roman commander now extended far over Britain; for he was recalled from his attack upon the Cangi by a hostile movement of the Brigantes, a people who undoubtedly held the regions north of the Mersey, and whose power extended from sea to sea.[2] No sooner were these ill-combined efforts repressed, and submission secured by a judicious mixture of energy and moderation, than the attention of Ostorius was called to the coercion of the Silures, the people of South Wales, who continued, under the guidance of Caractacus, to threaten the outposts of the Roman power, and obstruct their communications. From the name of their chief, who seems, as before observed, to have been the son of Cunobelin, it would appear that the Silures, far westward as their district lay, bore some relation of dependence or descent to the leading nation of the East. This relation is again indicated by

[1] Ptol. *Geogr.* ii. 3. Tacitus, however, declares that Ostorius nearly reached the Irish sea: "Ductus in Cangos exercitus . . . . vastati agri . . . . jam ventum haud procul mari quod Hiberniam insulam aspectat." *Ann.* xii. 32. Ritter reads "Decantos," a name found also in Ptolemy, for "Cangos." Neither tribe is mentioned elsewhere.

[2] Seneca calls them "cæruleos scuta Brigantas" (*Apocol.* 12.).

the establishment, of which we are now apprised, of a colony at Camulodunum, on purpose to check and overawe them.[1] Ostorius was commissioned by the emperor to plant a military colony in Britain, to become the stronghold of the Roman power in the island. For this purpose the site of the Trinobantine capital, far as it was removed from the seat of hostilities at the time, was chosen. If far from the Severn and the mountains of Siluria, it lay so much the nearer to Gaul, and the centre of the Roman resources. It was the proper base of the Roman operations for the entire subjugation of the island. If not in the direct route from Gessoriacum and Lugdunum to Britain, it was not far distant from it; it lay to the north of the broad Thames; it overshadowed the dubious territories of the Iceni; while the prompt submission of the Regni on the shores of the Channel, might avail to exempt them from the burden of so unwelcome a guest in their peaceful country. Farther, the establishment of a colony in the country of the Trinobantes, involving as it did the confiscation of a portion of their soil, the utter subjection of their people, the overthrow of their civil polity, might be inflicted on them to punish the protracted resistance of their chief among the distant tribes to whom he had betaken himself. On all these accounts the foundation of the colony of Camulodunum may not seem so irrelevant as some have considered it, to the contest now pending between the Romans and the Silures.[2]

Foundation of the colony of Camulodunum. A. D. 50. A. U. 803.

Under the republic the colony was a direct offshoot from the parent city: a number of citizens were told

[1] Such is the express declaration of Tacitus: "Id quo promptius veniret (*i. e.* the reduction of the Silures), Colonia Camulodunum . . . . deducitur."

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 32. It is on account of this presumed incongruity that some antiquarians have actually supposed that Camulodunum was somewhere in North Wales.

off by lot to occupy, like a swarm of bees, to which they were commonly compared, their appointed station; and the soil of the conquered land was appropriated to them as their *ager* or national territory. As an offset from a nation of soldiers the colonists were themselves all soldiers, and their new city, founded on the principles of the old, was in fact a stationary camp, furnished with the same civil and military appliances as the metropolis itself; not only with the streets and houses, the walls and ditch, but with the temples and tribunals, above all with the sacred Augural, or spot on which the auspices might be duly observed. But the citizen had now lost most of his military traditions. When he migrated to a foreign settlement, it was generally as a private trader or adventurer. The civilian could no longer be induced to relinquish his peaceful indulgences and go forth armed and booted, in the prospect of a slender patrimony to be cultivated with toil and defended with his blood. On the other hand the paid defenders of the state,—the military profession, as it had now become,—were no longer fit to return, after many years of service, to the staid habits of the municipium from which they had been levied: they retained no taste for the amenities of civil life, and might even be dangerous in the crowded streets and among the mutinous rabble of a vicious city. The colony was now merely a convenient receptacle for the discharged veterans of the camp. Transferred from active duty in the field or the parade, to which they were no longer equal, they were expected to maintain, as armed pensioners of the state, the terror of the Roman name on the frontiers by their proud demeanour and habits of discipline, rather than by the strength of hands now drooping at their sides. The lands of the Trinobantes were wrested from their ancient possessors and conveyed to the new intruders: the veterans established themselves in the dwellings

Character of the Roman colony in Britain.

of the hapless natives, desecrated their holy places, applied to their own use their goods and chattels, perhaps even their wives and daughters; and if they left them any rights at all, set up tribunals of their own to decide every matter in dispute with them. The colonists in an assembly of their own, like the comitia of the Roman people, chose their own officers, and governed themselves by their own regulations and by-laws; holding themselves ever ready to fly to arms in defence of their common usurpation. In the colony of Camulodunum the Britons beheld an image, rude indeed and distorted, of the camp on the Rhine or Danube, combined with the city on the Tiber. They enjoyed, as far as they could learn to appreciate it, a faint reflex of the civilization of the South, and were taught to ascribe the fortune of their conquerors to the favour of strange divinities, to whom altars were erected and victims slain. But to none of these did they see such honour paid as to Claudius himself, in the name of none were so many vows conceived, as of the emperor whose person they had once beheld visibly among them; of whom they still heard by report, as the presiding genius of the empire, the centre of the world's adoration. A temple of unusual size and splendour was erected to this divinity in the colony of Camulodunum, or the Conquering Claudian, as it was officially styled, special estates were granted for its service, and the most distinguished among the Britons were invited to enrol themselves in the college of the Claudian Flamens.[1]

Inauguration of the worship of Claudius at Camulodunum.

In one respect, however, the new colony fell short both of the city and the camp, on the plan of which it was designed. The capital of the Trinobantes has already been described as a vast enclosure for retreat from invasion, occupied by clus-

Security of the Romans.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 31.; Orell. *Inscript.* 208.: "Colonia Victricensis quæ est in Britannia Camuloduni."

ters of straggling huts and cabins, with no continuous streets, still less with any regular fortifications. Such a mode of agglomeration, common to the Britons with the Germans, and at least the northern Gauls, was altogether foreign to the habits of the Romans, who dwelt always in compact masses of habitations, laid out on plans comparatively regular, and defended by works of military art. The oppidum was the British, the urbs was the Roman city. But the veterans who now occupied the stronghold of Cunobelin were too indolent, it seems, to trace the lines of a fortress for their own protection: they found the site of their new dwellings agreeable, the houses even of the Britons were to the rude inmates of the tent not inconvenient: they furnished themselves with a temple, a senate-house, and even a theatre for the amusement of their idleness; they erected a statue of Victory to commemorate their triumph; but they delayed to construct the necessary defences, and in contemptuous disregard for the conquered enemy, continued to enjoy their new-acquired ease with no apprehensions for their future security.[1] However slight might be the influence of this type of southern culture upon the distant Silures, the Iceni, whose frontier bordered closely upon it, were powerfully affected. They beheld with admiration the advance of luxury and splendour, and acquiesced once more, with increasing fervour, in the terms of unequal alliance proffered by the Romans.

Resistance of Caractacus and the Silures.

Thus doubly secured by the influence of arms and arts in his rear, Ostorius was enabled to bring the whole weight of his forces to bear on the still unconquered Silures. For nine years Caractacus, at the head of the independent Britons, had maintained the conquest with the invader. The genius of this patriot chief, the first of

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 31: "Dum amœnitati prius quam usui consulitur."

our national heroes, may be estimated, not from victories, of which the envious foe has left us no account, but from the length of his gallant resistance, and the magnitude of the operations which it was necessary to direct against him. How often he may have burst from the mountains of Wales, and swept with his avenging squadrons the fields of the Roman settlers on the Severn and the Avon,—how often he may have plunged again into his fastnesses, and led the pursuers into snares prepared for them beyond the Wye and the Usk,—remains for ever buried in the oblivion which has descended on the heroic deeds of the enemies of Rome. Worn out, or starved out, or circumvented perchance by the toils ever closing around him, he made a last effort to remove the seat of war from the country of the Silures to that of the Ordovices or North Wales, the common boundary of the two lying probably between the Wye and the Teme.[1] Ostorius having returned from his foray among the Cangi, having chastised and pacified the Brigantes, and established at the same time his colony at Camulodunum, collected all his strength to crush this last effort of resistance. To attack the Silures he would descend probably from his northern stations along the course of the Severn; the Britons, hovering on the eastern flanks of the Welsh mountains, would draw him up one of their lateral valleys to the westward; but whether he forced his passage by the gorges of the Verniew, or the upper Severn, by the Clun, the Teme, or the Wye, seems impossible to determine. Each of these routes has had its advocates, and to this day the surviving descendants of the Britons contend with generous emulation for the

[1] From the distances marked in the XII. and XIII. *Itinera* of Antoninus it has been supposed that Branogenium (of the Ordovices) is at Leintwardine on the Teme, and Magna (of the Silures) at Kentchester, a little north of the Wye. The boundary, therefore, would lie between these two rivers.

honour of the discovery. All along the frontier of the principality, every hill crowned with an old entrenchment, and fronted by a stream, has been claimed as the scene of the last struggle of British independence; there are at least six Richmonds in the field, and the discreet historian must decline to decide between them.[1]

Last battle and overthrow of Caractacus.

Caractacus took up a position of his own choosing, where the means both of approach and of retreat were most convenient for himself and unfavourable to the enemy. It was defended in part by a steep and lofty acclivity; in part by stones rudely thrown together; a stream with no frequented ford flowed before it, and chosen bands of his best armed and bravest warriors were stationed in front of its defences.[2] To the spirit and eloquence

[1] The spots which have been most confidently assigned for the last battle of Caractacus are Coxall Knoll, on the Teme, near Leintwardine (Roy); Cefn Carnedd, west of the Severn, near Llanidloes (Hartshorne, *Salop. Antiq.* p. 63.); Caer Caradoc, on the Clun, in Shropshire (Gough's *Camden*, iii. p. 3, 13.); and the Breiddhen hills, near Welshpool, on the Severn (*Archæol. Cambr.* April, 1851). A Roman camp, now called Castel Collen, may be traced as far west as the Ython, near Rhayader, and here, too, a suitable locality might be found. But all is misty conjecture. It would seem that Ostorius, intending to strike at the centre of Siluria, was drawn northwestward by the movements of Caractacus into the country of the Ordovices, along one of the lateral valleys that issue from the Welsh mountains. Tacitus says only: "Transfert bellum in Ordovices." *Ann.* xii. 33.

[2] Tac. *l. c.*: "Præfluebat amnis vado incerto." This seems to imply, not that the stream was actually deep or rapid, but that crossing no road at the spot, it had no accustomed ford. Even the season of the year is not mentioned, so that we cannot tell whether the water was above or below its ordinary height. It seems, however, to have been crossed without difficulty. The character of Coxall Knoll, which many years ago I examined with more faith than I can now indulge in, is not inconsistent with the narrative. The river is now a narrow and shallow stream, at least in the middle of summer, and deeply tinged by the peat-mosses through which it flows: "Visus adhuc amnis veteri de clade rubere." The hill, steep in front, but easily accessible from the rear, is crowned with considerable earthworks. On descending from the spot which I believed to be the

of the chief, the Britons responded with shouts of enthusiasm, and each tribe bound itself by the oaths it held most sacred, to stand its ground or fall, if it must fall, fighting. Ostorius, on his part, was amazed at the ardour of men whom he supposed to be beaten, cowed, and driven hopelessly to bay. He was even disconcerted at the strength of the British position, and the swarms which defended it. It was the eagerness of the soldiers rather than his own courage or judgment that determined him to give the signal for attack. The stream was crossed without difficulty, for every legionary was a swimmer, and the Britons had no engines for hurling missiles from a distance, nor were they noted even for the rude artillery of bows and slings. But they defended their rampart obstinately with poles and javelins, and from behind it dealt wounds and death upon the assailants till the Romans could form the tortoise, approach to the foot of the wall, tear down its uncemented materials, and bursting in, challenge them to combat hand to hand. Unequal to the shock of the Roman array, the Britons retreated up the hill; the Romans, both the light and the heavy-armed, pressed gallantly upon them, and imperfectly as they were equipped, they could withstand neither the sword and pilum of the legionary, nor the lance and spear of the allies. The victory, quickly decided, was brilliant and complete. The wife and daughter of Caractacus were taken; his brothers threw down their arms and surrendered.[1]

scene of the eclipse of British freedom, I found an Italian organ-boy making sport at an alehouse door to a group of Welsh peasants. I could not fail to moralize with Tacitus: "Rebus humanis inest quidam orbis."

[1] Caractacus, Togodumnus, and Adminius have been mentioned from Dion as the sons of Cunobelin. We have disposed of the two last; but Tacitus seems here to refer to other surviving brothers of the family. From this presumed discrepancy, coupled with the remoteness of the campaigns of Caractacus from the country of Cunobelin, it has been imagined that Dion was in error, and that the

Caractacus betrayed by Cartismandua. Exhibited at Rome and pardoned by Claudius.

The brave chief himself escaped from the slaughter, evaded the pursuit, and found an asylum for a time in the territory of the Brigantes, leaving all the south open to the invaders. He might hope to remove the contest to the northern parts of the island, a land of streams and mountains like his own long-defended Siluria: but Cartismandua, the female chief of this nation (for though married she seems herself, rather than her husband Venutius, to have been actual ruler of the Brigantes), was determined by her own fears and interests to betray him to the Romans. The fame of his nine years' struggle had penetrated beyond the British isles and the Gaulish provinces; and when he was led captive through the streets of Rome, great was the curiosity of the citizens to behold the hero who had rivalled the renown of Arminius and Tacfarinas. The triumph of Claudius had been solemnized before; but the emperor gratified his vanity by exhibiting the British prince before the imperial tribunal. A grand military spectacle was devised, in which Claudius appeared seated before the gates of the prætorian camp, attended by his guards, and surrounded by the multitude of citizens. Agrippina, clothed like himself in a military garb, took her seat on the tribunal by his side, the ensigns of a Roman army floating over her head. The slaves and clients of the vanquished prince were first led before them, with the glittering trophies of his arms and accoutrements. Behind these marched the brothers, the wife, and the tender daughter of the hero, and their pusillanimous wailings moved no pity in the spectators. But the bearing of Caractacus him-

British hero was a native chief of the remote Silures, and not a Trinobantine. So also the Welsh traditions represent Caractacus as a Silurian; but are not these the traditions of a people hemmed in between the Severn and the Irish Channel, who had long forgotten that they had once extended to the German Ocean?

self, who closed the train of captives, was noble and worthy of his noble cause: nor did it fail to excite the admiration it deserved. He was permitted to address the emperor. He reminded Claudius that the obstinacy of his resistance enhanced the glory of his defeat; were he now ignominiously put to death, the fate of so many worsted enemies of Rome, his name and exploits would be soon forgotten; but if bid to live, they would be eternally remembered, as a memorial of the emperor's clemency. The imperial historian was easily moved by an appeal to his yearning for historic celebrity.[1] He granted the lives of his illustrious captives, and bade them give thanks, not to himself only but to his consort, who shared with him the toils and distinctions of empire. It was politic as well as merciful to spare the legitimate claimant of a British throne; to keep him at Rome to be employed as occasion might suggest: and thus Caractacus, we may believe, was retained, together with his family, in honourable custody, till he grew old in the long-deferred hope of restoration. They were enrolled perhaps among the clients of the Claudian house; and indulgence may be challenged for the pleasing conjecture, that *Claudia the foreigner, Claudia the offspring of the painted Britons*, whose charms and genius are celebrated by Martial, was actually the child of the hero Caractacus.[2]

Continued resistance of the Britons.

The victory had been the most complete, and in its results the most important, that had yet occurred in Britain; and there was no mean servility in the senators extolling the emperor's fame and fortune to the skies, and com-

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 36—38. Such an act of clemency in a Roman imperator must not be passed by without especial notice. Claudius stands in honourable contrast to the murderers of Pontius, of Perses, of Jugurtha, and Vercingetorix.

[2] Martial, ii. 54., iv. 13. This was the faith of Fuller, Stillingfleet, and our old ecclesiastical historians, who identified this princess at

paring him to a Scipio and a Paulus, who had exhibited a Syphax and a Perses to the applauding citizens. To Ostorius were accorded the triumphal ornaments; but he had not yet leisure to repose on his laurels, for the Britons flew again to arms on the capture of their champion, and maintained on the skirts of their mountain fastnesses a warfare of forays and surprises, which kept the Romans ever on the alert. Again and again defeated, they still found means to revenge their losses. Harassed and decimated, they retaliated by bloody massacres. They were roused to despair, however fruitless, by the ferocious threats of the prefect, who vowed to destroy and extinguish their very name, as that of the Sigambri, once so formidable, had been utterly obliterated in Germany.[1]

On the death of Ostorius which shortly ensued from chagrin, it is said, as much as from fatigue, the province was entrusted to Didius, sent in haste from Rome to take the command. During the interval, while the legions perhaps were careless or reluctant in their obedience to an inferior officer, the Roman arms suffered an ignominious check from the Silures, and the province itself seemed for a moment to lie at their mercy. The arrival of Didius, old and inactive as he was, served to brace again the discipline of his armies, and they recovered their superiority. But the transient shock their reputation had suffered broke the charm of success. Cartismandua, who had delivered Caractacus to the Romans, and in return had been upheld by their influence against the indignation of her country-

Cartismandua overthrown by her own subjects.

the same time with Claudia, the convert of St. Paul. More favour has been recently shown to the ingenious hypothesis of Mr. Williams, who infers, from the remarkable inscription at Chichester, that the Claudia of Martial and St. Paul was daughter of king Cogidubnus. On this subject I shall have occasion to speak again.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 38, 39.

men, was now expelled from her realm by a popular insurrection. Relying on her foreign defenders, she had driven away her mock-husband Venutius, slain some of his kinsmen, and degraded herself to the embrace of a menial. The Brigantes took the side of the injured husband, placed him, as a noted warrior, at their head, attacked the queen in her stronghold, and had nearly succeeded in overpowering her, when Didius interfered, and released her from her peril. But the new prefect did not attempt to recover the footing of the Romans in the north. He allowed Venutius to seat himself once more on the throne of the Brigantes, and was content with keeping watch over his power, and occasionally advancing an outpost beyond his borders. Such was the state of affairs which continued to subsist in this quarter twenty years later.[1]

The Roman province of Britain.

Thus unsettled were the limits of the Roman occupation at the close of the reign of Claudius. The southern part of the island from the Stour to the Exe and Severn formed a compact and organised province, from which only the realm of Cogidubnus, retaining still the character of a dependent sovereignty, is to be subtracted.[2] Beyond the Stour, again, the territory of the Iceni constituted another extraneous dependency. The government of the province was administered from Camulodunum, as its capital; and the whole country was overawed by the martial attitude of the Conquering Colony there established. Already, perhaps, Londinium, though distinguished by no such honourable title, excelled it as a place of commercial resort. The broad estuary of the Thames, confronting the waters of the Scheldt and Maas, was well placed for the ex-

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 40.; *Hist.* iii. 45.; *Agric.* 14.: "Parta a prioribus continuit paucis admodum castellis in ulteriora promotis."

[2] Tacitus, who entered public life thirty years later, says of him (*Agric.* 14.): "Is ad nostram usque memoriam fidissimus mansit."

change of British against Gaulish and German products; and the hill on which the city stood, facing the southern sun, and adapted for defence, occupies precisely the spot where first the river can be crossed conveniently. Swept east and west by the tidal stream, and traversed north and south by the continuous British roads, Londinium supplied the whole island with the luxuries of another zone, just as Massilia had supplied Gaul.[1] Hither led the ways which penetrated Britain from the ports in the Channel, from Lymne, Richborough, and Dover. From hence they diverged again to Camulodunum north-east, and to Verulamium north-west, where the chief lines of communication intersected one another. While the prefect, as governor-in-chief of the province, was occupied on the frontier in military operations, the finances were administered by a procurator; and whatever extortions he might countenance, so slight was the apprehension of any formidable resistance, that not only the towns, now frequented by thousands of Roman traders, were left unfortified, but the province itself was suffered to remain almost denuded of soldiers. The legions now permanently quartered in Britain were still the four which have before been mentioned. Of these the Second, the same which under the command of Vespasian had recently conquered the south-west, was now perhaps stationed in the forts on the Severn and Avon, or advanced to the encampment on the Usk, whence sprang the famous city of Caerleon, the camp of the Legion.[2] The Ninth was placed in

Station of the presidiary legions.

[1] Milton: "Me tenet urbs *reflua* quam Thamesis alluit unda;" not Reading or Windsor, but London, the only city on the tidal waters of the Thames.

[2] The Roman towns and villas, which have been discovered in such numbers along the course of the Severn and Avon, grew probably out of their system of defences against the long untamed brigandage of the western mountaineers. The Cæsars had their Welsh marches as well as the Plantagenets. Isca Silurum must have

guard over the Iceni, whose fidelity was not beyond suspicion. We may conjecture that its headquarters were planted as far north as the Wash, where it might dislocate any combinations these people should attempt to form with their unsteady neighbours the Brigantes. The Twentieth would be required to confront the Brigantes also on their western frontier, and to them we may assign the position on the Deva or Dee, from which the ancient city of Chester has derived its name, its site, and the foundations, at least, of its venerable fortifications.[1] There still remained another legion, the Fourteenth; but neither was this held in reserve in the interior of the province. The necessities of border warfare required its active operations among the Welsh mountains, which it penetrated step by step, and gradually worked its way towards the last asylum of the Druids in Mona, or Anglesey. The Gaulish priesthood, proscribed in their own country, would naturally fly for refuge to Britain: proscribed in Britain, wherever the power of Rome extended, they retreated, inch by inch, and withdrew from the massive shrines which still attest their influence on our southern plains, to the sacred recesses of the little island, surrounded by boiling tides, and clothed with impenetrable thickets. In this gloomy lair, secure apparently, though shorn of might and dignity, they still persisted in the practice of their unholy superstition. They strove, perhaps, like the trembling priests of Mexico, to appease the gods, who seemed to avert their faces, with more horrid sacrifices than

Retreat of the Druids into Anglesey.

been an important post for the protection of the Roman ironworks in the Forest of Dean.

[1] The position of the headquarters of the Second legion at Isca Silurum (Caerleon), and of the Twentieth at Deva (Chester), is established from lapidary remains. These may be no doubt of a later period, but, as a general rule, these positions, after the first consolidation of the Roman power, were permanent.

ever. Here they retained their assemblies, their schools, and their oracles; here was the asylum of the fugitives; here was the sacred grove, the abode of the awful Deity, which in the stillest noon of night or day the priest himself scarce ventured to enter, lest he should rush unwitting into the presence of its Lord.[1]

Suetonius Paullinus routs the Britons in Anglesey. A. D. 61. A. U. 814.

Didius had been satisfied with retaining the Roman acquisitions, and had made no attempt to extend them; and his successor, Veranius, had contented himself with some trifling incursions into the country of the Silures. The death of Veranius prevented, perhaps, more important operations. But he had exercised rigorous discipline in the camp, and Suetonius Paullinus, who next took the command, found the legions well equipped and well disposed, and their stations connected by military roads across the whole breadth of the island. The rumours of the city marked out this man as a rival to the gallant Corbulo, and great successes were expected from the measures which he would be prompt in adopting. Leaving the Second legion on the Usk to keep the Silures in check, and the Twentieth on the Dee to watch the Brigantes, he joined the quarters of the Fourteenth, now pushed as far as Segontium on the Menai Straits.[2] He prepared a number of rafts or boats for the passage of the infantry; the stream at low water was, perhaps, nearly fordable for cavalry, and the trusty Batavians on his wings were accustomed to swim by their horses' sides clinging by the mane or bridle, across

[1] Lucan, iii. 423.,—

"Medio cum Phœbus in axe est,
Aut cœlum nox atra tenet, pavet ipse sacerdos
Accessus, dominumque timet deprendere luci."

[2] Segontium is the modern Caernarvon. There is every appearance of great changes having taken place in the line of coast in this neighbourhood.

the waters, not less wide and rapid, of their native Rhine. Still the traject must have been perilous enough, even if unopposed. But now the further bank was thronged with the Britons in dense array, while between their ranks, the women, clad in black and with hair dishevelled, rushed like furies with flaming torches, and behind them were seen the Druids raising their hands to heaven, invoking curses on the daring invaders. The Romans were so dismayed at the sight that, as they came to land, they at first stood motionless, to be struck down by every assailant. But this panic lasted but for a moment. Recalled by the cries of their chiefs to a sense of discipline, of duty, of danger, they closed their ranks, advanced their standards, struck, broke and trampled on the foe before them, and applied his own torches to his machines and waggons. The rout was complete; the fugitives, flung back by the sea, had no further place of retreat. The island was seamed with Roman entrenchments, the groves cut down or burnt, and every trace speedily abolished of the foul rites by which Heseus had been propitiated, or the will of Taranis consulted.[1]

Discontent of the Iceni.

From this moment the Druids disappear from the page of history; they were exterminated, we may believe, upon their own altars; for Suetonius took no half measures. But whatever were his further designs for the final pacification of the province, they were interrupted by the sudden outbreak of a revolt in his rear. The Iceni, as has been said, had submitted, after their great overthrow, to the yoke of the invaders: their king Prasutagus had been allowed indeed to retain his nominal sovereignty: but he was placed under the control of Roman officials; his people were required to contribute to the Roman treasury: their communities were incited to

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 30.

a profuse expenditure which exceeded their resources: while the exactions imposed on them were so heavy that they were compelled to borrow largely, and entangle themselves in the meshes of the Roman money-lenders. The great capitalists of the city, wealthy courtiers, and prosperous freedmen, advanced the sums they called for at exorbitant interest; from year to year they found themselves less able to meet their obligations, and mortgaged property and person to their unrelenting creditors. Among the immediate causes of the insurrection which followed, is mentioned the sudden calling in by Seneca, the richest of philosophers, of the large investments he had made, which he seemed in danger of losing altogether.[1]

Insurrection of the Iceni.

But the oppression of the Romans was not confined to these transactions. Prasutagus, in the hope of propitiating the provincial government to his family, had bequeathed his dominions to the republic. He expected perhaps that his wife and his children, who were also females, if not allowed to exercise even a nominal sovereignty after him, would at least be treated in consequence with the respect due to their rank, and secured in the enjoyment of ample means and consideration. This was the fairest lot that remained to the families of the dependent chieftains, and the Romans had not often grudged it them. But an insolent official, placed in charge of these new acquisitions after the death of Prasutagus, forgot what was due to the birth and even the sex of the wretched princesses. He suspected them, perhaps, of secreting a portion of their patrimony, and did not scruple to employ stripes to recover it from the mother, while he surrendered her tender children to even worse indignities. Boadicea, the widowed queen of the Iceni, was a woman of masculine spirit. Far from succumbing under the

[1] Dion, lxii. 2. Dion is ill-natured; yet I do not think he can have invented this story; and Brutus had done the like.

cruelty of her tyrants and hiding the shame of her family, she went forth into the public places, showed the scars of her wounds, and the fainting forms of her abused daughters, and adjured her people to a desperate revenge. The Iceni were stung to frenzy at their sovereign's wrongs, at their own humiliation. The danger, the madness, of the attempt was considered by none for a moment. They rose as one man: there was no power at hand to control them: the Roman officials fled, or, if arrested, were slaughtered; and a vast multitude, armed and unarmed, rolled southward to overwhelm and extirpate the intruders. To the Colne, to the Thames, to the sea, the country lay entirely open. The legions were all removed to a distance, the towns were uninclosed, the Roman traders settled in them were untrained to arms. Even the Claudian colony was undefended. The procurator, Catus Decianus, was at the moment absent, and being pressed for succour, could send no more than two hundred soldiers for its protection. Little reliance could be placed on the strength of a few worn-out veterans: the natives, however specious their assurances, were not unjustly distrusted, for they too, like the Iceni, had suffered insolence and ill-treatment. The great temple of Claudius was a standing monument of their humiliation: for its foundation their estates had been confiscated, for its support their tribute was required, and they regarded as victims or traitors, the native chiefs who had been enrolled in its service. Whatever alarm they might feel at the indiscriminate fury of the hordes descending upon them, they smiled grimly at the panic which more justly seized the Romans. The guilty objects of national vengeance discovered the direst prodigies in every event around them. The wailings of their women, the neighing of their horses, were interpreted as evil omens. Their theatre was said to have resounded with uncouth noises; the buildings of

the colony had been seen inversely reflected in the waters of their estuary; and at ebb-tide ghastly remains of human bodies had been discovered in the ooze.[1] Above all, the statue of Victory, planted to face the enemies of the republic, had turned its back to the advancing barbarians and fallen prostrate before them. When the colonists proposed to throw up hasty entrenchments they were dissuaded from the work, or impeded in it by the natives, who persisted in declaring that there was no cause for fear: it was not till the Iceni were actually in sight, and the treachery of the Trinobantes no longer doubtful, that they retreated tumultuously within the precincts of the temple, and strengthened its slender defences to support a sudden attack till succour could arrive. But the impetuosity of the assault overcame all resistance. The stronghold was stormed on the second day, and all who had sought refuge in it, armed and unarmed, given up to slaughter.[2]

Surprise and capture of Camulodunum.

Meanwhile the report of this fearful movement had travelled far and wide through the country. It reached Petilius Cerialis, the commander of the Ninth legion, which I suppose to have been stationed near the Wash, and he broke up promptly from his camp to hang on the rear of the

Suetonius hastens to relieve the disaster.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 32.: "Visam speciem in æstuario Tamesæ subversæ coloniæ." The "estuary of the Thames" may comprise the whole extent of the deep indentation of the coast between Landguard Point and the North Foreland.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 31, 32.; *Agric.* 16.: "Nec ullum in barbaris sævitiæ genus omisit ira et victoria." The atrocities inflicted on the captives are described in horrid detail by Dion, lxii. 1—7.; τὰς γὰρ γυναῖκας τὰς εὐγενεστάτας καὶ εὐπρεπεστάτας γυμνὰς ἐκρέμασαν, καὶ τούς τε μαστοὺς αὐτῶν περιέτεμον, καὶ τοῖς στόμασι σφῶν προσέῤῥαπτον, ὅπως ὡς καὶ ἐσθίουσαι αὐτοὺς ὁρῷντο· καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο πασσάλοις ὀξέσι διὰ παντὸς τοῦ στόματος κατὰ μῆκος ἀνέπειραν. In the immediate neighbourhood of Colchester a skeleton is said to have been found which, from the implements lying by it, seems to have been that of a Roman priest, buried head downwards: καὶ ταῦτα πάντα, says Dion, ὑβρίζοντες.

insurgents. It reached the Twentieth legion at Deva, which awaited the orders of Suetonius himself, as soon as he should learn on the banks of the Menai the perils in which the province was involved. The prefect withdrew the Fourteenth legion from the smoking groves of Mona, and urged it with redoubled speed along the highway of Watling Street, picking out the best troops from the Twentieth as he rushed by, and summoning the Second from Isca to join him in the South. But Pænius Postumus, who commanded this latter division, neglected to obey his orders, and crouched in terror behind his fortifications. The Iceni turned boldly on Cerialis, who was hanging close upon their heels, and routed his wearied battalions with great slaughter. The infantry of the Ninth legion was cut in pieces, and the cavalry alone escaped to their entrenchments.[1] But the barbarians had not skill nor patience to conduct the siege of a Roman camp. They left the squadron of Cerialis unmolested, nor did they attempt to force the scattered posts around them. After giving Camulodunum to the flames, they dispersed throughout the country, plundering and destroying. Suetonius, unappalled by the frightful accounts which thronged upon him, held on his course steadfastly with his single legion, broke through the scattered bands of the enemy, and reached Londinium without a check.[2] This place was crowded with Roman residents, crowded still more at this moment with fugitives from the country towns and villas: but it was undefended by walls, its population of traders was of little account in military eyes, and Suetonius sternly determined to leave it, with all the wealth it harboured, to the barbarians, rather than sacrifice

[1] The site of this battle has been assigned, with some probability, from the great tumulus at that spot, to Wormingford, six miles north of Colchester.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 33.: "At Suetonius mira constantia medios inter hostes Londinium perrexit."

his soldiers in the attempt to save it.[1] The policy of the Roman commander was to secure his communications with Gaul: but he was resolved not to abandon the country, nor surrender the detachments hemmed in at various points by the general rising of the Britons. The precise direction of his movements we can only conjecture. Had he retired to the southern bank of the Thames, he would probably have defended the passage of that river; or had the Britons crossed it unresisted, the historians would not have failed to specify so important a success. But the situation of Camulodunum, inclosed in its old British lines, and backed by the sea, would offer him a secure retreat where he might defy attack, and await reinforcements; and the insurgents, after their recent triumphs, had abandoned their first conquests to wreak their fury on other seats of Roman civilization. While, therefore, the Iceni sacked and burnt first Verulamium, and next Londinium, Suetonius made, as I conceive, a flank march toward Camulodunum, and kept ahead of their pursuit, till he could choose his own position to await their attack. In a valley between undulating hills, with woods in the rear, and the ramparts of the British oppidum not far perhaps on his right, he had every advantage for marshalling his slender forces: and these were increased in number more than in strength by the fugitives capable of bearing arms, whom he allowed to cling to his fortunes.[2] Ten thou-

[1] "Unius oppidi damno servare universa statuit." Our early antiquarians could trace the remains of a Roman encampment at Islington, which they supposed to have been the quarters of Suetonius at this moment.

[2] Tac. *l. c.*: "Comitantes in partem agminis acceperat." I am indebted to the Rev. Mr. Jenkins, of Stanway, near Colchester, for this conjecture with regard to the direction of the march, and the site of the battle. His views are explained in a tract in the *Archæologia*, 1842; and I may refer the reader to some further remarks upon them in the *Quarterly Review*, vol. xcvii. His speculations, I may add, have been of the highest value to me, though I must be content sometimes to follow them "non passibus æquis."

sand resolute men drew their swords for the Roman empire in Britain. The natives, many times their number, spread far and wide over the plain; but they could assail the narrow front of the Romans with only few battalions at once, and their waggons, which conveyed their accumulated booty and bore their wives and children, thronged the rear, and cut off almost the possibility of the retreat.

Defeat of the Iceni.

But flushed with victory, impatient for the slaughter, animated with desperate resolution to die or conquer, the Britons cast no look or thought behind them. Boadicea drove her car from rank to rank, from nation to nation, with her daughters beside her, attesting the outrage she had endured, the vengeance she had already taken, proclaiming the gallant deeds of the queens before her, under whom British warriors had so often triumphed, denouncing the intolerable yoke of Roman insolence, and declaring that whatever the men might determine, the women would now be free or perish. The harangue of Suetonius, on the other hand, was blunt and sarcastic. He told his men not to mind the multitudes before them, nor the noise they made: there were more women among them than men: as for their own numbers, let them remember that in all battles a few good swordsmen really did the work; the half-armed and dastard crowds would break and fly when they felt again the prowess of the Roman veterans. Thus encouraged, the legionaries could with difficulty be restrained to await the onset; and as soon as the assailants had exhausted their missiles, bore down upon them in the wedge-shaped column, which had so often broken Greeks, Gauls, and Carthaginians. The auxiliaries followed with no less impetuosity. The horsemen, lance in hand, pierced the ranks which still kept their ground. But a single charge was enough. The Britons were in a moment shattered and routed. In another moment, the Romans had

reached the wide circumvallation of waggons, among which the fugitives were scrambling in dismay, slew the cattle and the women without remorse, and traced with a line of corpses and carcases the limits of the British position. We may believe that the massacre was enormous. The Romans declared that 80,000 of their enemies perished, while of their own force they lost only 400 slain and about as many wounded. Boadicea put an end to her life by poison: we could have wished to hear that the brave barbarian had fallen on a Roman pike. Suetonius had won the greatest victory of the imperial history; to complete his triumph, the coward, Postumus, who had shrunk from aiding him, threw himself, in shame and mortification, on his own sword.[1]

Final suppression of the insurrection.

By this utter defeat the British insurrection was paralysed. Throughout the remainder of the season the Romans kept the field; they received reinforcements from the German camps, and their scattered cohorts were gradually brought together in a force which overawed all resistance. The revolted districts were chastised with fire and sword, and the systematic devastation inflicted upon them, suffering as they already were from the neglect of tillage during the brief intoxication of their success, produced a famine which swept off the seeds of future insurrections. On both sides a fearful amount of destruction had been committed. Amidst the overthrow of the great cities of southern Britain, not less than seventy thousand Roman colonists had perished. The work of twenty years was in a moment undone. Far and wide every vestige of Roman civiliza-

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 34—37.; *Agric.* 16. Dion, lxii. 12. From the slender accounts we have received of this outbreak it would seem to have been confined to the Iceni, which makes it the more probable that these people were a different race from the Celtic Britons. Their numbers as indicated by Dion, and even by Tacitus, deserve little reliance.

tion was trodden into the soil. At this day the workmen who dig through the foundations of the Norman and the Saxon London, strike beneath them on the traces of two distinct Roman cities, between which lies a mass of charred and broken rubbish, attesting the conflagration of the terrible Boadicea.

The temper of Suetonius, as may be supposed from what has been already said of him, was stern and unbending, even beyond the ordinary type of his nation. No other officer, perhaps, in the Roman armies could have so turned disaster into victory, and recovered a province at a blow; but it was not in his character to soothe the conquered, to conciliate angry passions, to restore the charm of moral superiority. Classicianus, who was his next procurator, complained of him to the emperor, as wishing to protract hostilities when every end might be obtained by conciliation. A freedman of the court, named Polycletus, was sent on the delicate mission, to judge between the civil and the military chief, and to take the measures most fitting for securing peace and obedience. Polycletus brought with him a large force from Italy and Gaul, and was no less surprised perhaps than the legions he commanded, to see himself at the head of a Roman army. Even the barbarians, we are told, derided the victorious warriors who bowed in submission to the orders of a bondman. But Polycletus could make himself obeyed at least, if not respected. The loss of a few vessels on the coast furnished him with a pretext for removing Suetonius from his command, and transferring it to a consular, Petronius Turpilianus, whose temper and policy inclined equally to peace.[1]

Succeeded by a milder policy.

From the lenity of this propraetor the happiest con-

[1] Tacitus, as an admirer of Trajan, can never forego a gibe at captains who preferred the conquests of peace to those of warfare. Of this Turpilianus he says: "Is non irritato hoste, neque lacessitus, honestum pacis nomen segni otio imposuit." *Ann.* xiv. 39.

sequences evidently ensued. The southern Britons acquiesced in the dominion of Rome, while the northern were awed into deference to her superior influence. Her manners, her arts, her commerce, penetrated far into regions yet unconquered by the sword. Her establishments at Londinium, Verulamium, and Camulodunum rose again from their ashes. Never was the peaceful enterprise of her citizens more vigorous and elastic than at this period. The luxuries of Italy and the provinces, rapidly increasing, required the extension to the utmost of all her resources. Manufactures and commerce were pushed forward with unexampled activity. The products of Britain, rude as they were, consisting of raw materials chiefly, were demanded with an insatiable appetite by the cities of Gaul and Germany, and exchanged for arts and letters, which at least decked her servitude with silken fetters. The best of the Roman commanders,—and there were some, we may believe, among them both thoughtful and humane,—while they acknowledged they had no right to conquer, yet believed that their conquests were a blessing. The best of the native chiefs,—and some too of them may have wished for the real happiness of their countrymen,—acknowledged, perhaps, that while freedom is the noblest instrument of virtue, it only degrades the vicious to the lowest depths of barbarism.

Happy effects of this policy and rapid progress of civilization in Britain.

CHAPTER LII.

The family of the Domitii.—Early years of Nero.—His education under Seneca.—Struggle for influence over him between the senate, his tutor, and his mother.—He makes a favourable impression at the commencement of his reign.—His intrigue with Acte and gradual progress in vice.—Behaviour of Agrippina and Seneca.—Praise of his clemency.—Disgrace of Pallas.—Murder of Britannicus.—Division between Nero and Agrippina.—Intrigues against her.—Consecration of a temple to Claudius.—Favourable characteristics of Nero's early government.—His financial and legislative measures.—The "Quinquennium Neronis." (A.D. 54—59, A. U. 807—812.)

Family character of the Domitii, the ancestors of Nero.

A PECULIAR interest attaches to the history of the Romans through the greater part of its course, from the precision with which we can trace the character of families, descending often with the same unmistakeable lineaments from father to son, for many generations. We mark the pride of the Claudii; the turbulence of the Lepidi; the cool selfishness of the Pompeii. There is no more striking analogy between Roman and English history than this: it is only an aristocracy that can present us with a family history of public interest. The great men of democratic Athens stand out alone: no one cares to ask who were their fathers, or whether they left any sons. Had they sprung every one from the earth, as they fancifully boasted of their nation, their career and character could not have been, to all appearance, more independent of family antecedents. So strongly, however, were the features of the Roman family traced by the hereditary training of its members, that though the descent of blood was often interrupted by the practice of adoption, the moral aspects of its character

were still broadly but clearly preserved; and it becomes of little importance to ascertain, in each particular instance, whether the race was actually continued by natural succession, or interpolated by a legal fiction. The hereditary traditions of the Scipios were reflected faithfully in the legal representatives of their house, though some of the greatest of the name were not really connected by ties of affinity with one another. It was enough that the sentiment of connexion was preserved by the link of the domestic cult, and the common inheritance of the family honours. It had been remarked, however, of the patrician Claudii that numerous as their branches were, none of them down to the time of Tiberius Claudius the emperor, had ever been reduced to the necessity of perpetuating itself by adoption; and many others, no doubt, of the chief Roman houses had preserved their blood-descent equally unbroken.[1] Such unquestionably had been for many generations the boast of some, at least, of the Domitii. The stock from which the emperor Nero sprang may be traced back from son to father for about two hundred years. The Domitian gens was widely spread and illustrious in every branch. An Afer, a Marsus, a Celer, a Calvinus, had all obtained distinction in one or other of the various careers which courted the buoyant energy of the Roman aristocracy. But of these houses none was so full of honours as that of the Ahenobarbi, the progenitors of the emperor Nero. It was illustrious for the high public part it played through several generations; illustrious for its wealth and consideration, for its native vigour and ability, but execrable at the same time above every other for the combination of ferocity and faithlessness by which

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xii. 25.: "Adnotabant periti nullam antehac adoptionem inter patricios Claudios reperiri, eosque ab Atto Clauso continuos duravisse." Comp. Suet. *Claud.* 39.

its representatives were successively distinguished. The founder of the race, according to Suetonius, was a Lucius Domitius, to whom the Dioscuri announced the victory of Regillus, changing his beard from black to red in token of the divine manifestation. Thenceforth the name of Ahenobarbi, the Red or Brazen beards, was common to the family, and they inherited, it was piously believed, the complexion as regularly as the name. Time went on, and the Redbeards enjoyed seven consulships: one of them filled the office of censor: the house was raised from the Plebs to the Patriciate. From Cnæus Domitius Ahenobarbus, consul in 632, the conqueror of the Allobroges, we have the descent complete. The son of this victorious imperator was chief pontiff and censor in 662; his temper was violent and his public conduct austere. *No wonder*, said of him the refined and graceful Crassus, *that his beard is of brass, for his mouth is of iron and his heart of lead.* The grandson was consul in 667, and being joined in marriage to a daughter of Cinna, took the side of the Marians in the first civil wars. The great grandson, Lucius, has been signalized in these pages as an upholder of the Optimates against Cæsar, the son-in-law and representative of Cinna, and therefore against his own father's friends. He perished after a career of furious partisanship, disgraced with cruelty and treachery, on the field of Pharsalia. The fifth in descent, a Cnæus, for the prænomen generally alternated, was the follower of Brutus and Cassius, sided afterwards with their foe Antonius, and finally deserted his falling fortunes for the luckier star of Octavius.[1] The sixth was Lucius Domitius, who crossed the Elbe with a Roman army, a man to be noted in the military annals of his country, but whose

[1] Yet this Domitius, according to Suetonius, was "by far the best" of his race. Suet. *Ner.* 2.

temper was as savage as his grandfather's, and his tastes so sanguinary that Augustus was compelled to check the bloodshed of his gladiatorial shows. The son of Lucius, the seventh in direct succession, was infamous for crimes of every kind; for murder and treason, for adultery and incest. He was mean as well as cruel, and even stooped to enrich himself by petty pilfering. Towards the end of Tiberius's reign he was subjected to a charge of Majesty, and would probably have perished, but for the opportune decease of the emperor. Married to Agrippina, the sister of Caius Caligula, he became the father of Lucius Domitius, afterwards Nero. He made a jest of his own enormities; and it was reported at least, that on the child's birth he replied to the felicitations of his friends by grimly remarking, that nothing could spring from such a father and such a mother but what should be abominable and fatal to the state.[1]

Misfortunes of Nero's early years.

The commencement of the future emperor's career was clouded with perils and disasters. At the age of three years he lost his father's protection, and Caius, to whom, by way of precaution, two thirds of his patrimony had been bequeathed, shamelessly grasped the remainder also. The child thus despoiled, and rendered doubly an orphan by the exile of his mother, was left to the care of his father's sister, Domitia Lepida. By this selfish intriguer, the mother of Messalina, he seems to have been little cared for; his first tutors were a dancer and a barber; nevertheless his aunt appears to have considered, at least at a later period, that she had something of a mother's claims upon

[1] Suet, *Ner.* 5, 6.; Dion, lxi. 2. This writer's history, in the shape in which we possess it, from book lv. to lx. is probably only an abridgment, the author of which is unknown. From book lxi. we have only the epitome of Xiphilinus, which is still more meagre than the preceding, nor does it seem to be always faithful. It is often quoted under the name of the abbreviator. I have thought it, however, more convenient to preserve that of the original author.

him. Claudius, however, kindly restored him his inheritance, together with the fortune of Crispus Passienus, who had been Agrippina's first husband, and was afterwards apparently united to another of his aunts, named also Domitia.[1] The favour of this emperor, if we may believe the rumours of the day, gained the child at an early period the jealousy of Messalina; and he narrowly escaped being smothered by her emissaries in the security of his midday slumber.

His education.

From this epoch his fortunes have already been traced to the moment of his accession. The position of the young Domitius, as the son of a noble of the highest class, closely allied with the reigning family, yet not directly in the line of succession, was peculiarly favourable to his education. The loss of his fierce and brutal father, when he was but three years old, was certainly no matter of regret. The superintendence of his early training would thus fall exclusively to his mother interrupted only by the two years of her exile; and Agrippina seems, with all her faults, to have had at least a princely sense of the duty which thus devolved upon her. The child was docile and affectionate, apt to learn and eager for praise. His mother sought to imbue his mind with the best learning of the times, and at the same time to impart brilliancy and fascination to his manners. It was the fashion to complain of the decline of education at this period in the Roman world. Surrounded by vice and grossness of all kinds, and conscious of their degeneracy in virtue as

[1] Care must be taken not to confound the two aunts of Nero, Domitia Lepida, usually known by her second name only, and Domitia. The first was wife to Valerius Messala, mother of Messalina, a rival of Agrippina, who got her put to death by Claudius: Tac. *Ann.* xii. 65. The other was second wife to Passienus, and though also an object of jealousy to Agrippina, survived her, and was supposed to have been eventually poisoned by Nero. Suet. *Ner.* 34.; Dion, lxi. 17.

well as their neglect of decorum, it was in the corrupt training of childhood that moralists seemed to discover the germ of the evils they deplored. But, as usual with reactionists in social life, who from imperfect experience and sympathy see the defects only of the present, and the good only of the past, they mistook the cause of the disease, and wasted their energies in declamations against an imaginary evil. It was the complaint of the day that children were no longer educated by their own mothers, but consigned in their tenderest years to the mercenary supervision, first of handmaids, and soon afterwards of pedagogues. Such, it was said, had not been the practice of Aurelia, the mother of Julius Cæsar; of Atia, the parent of Octavius; of Cornelia, from whom her sons, the Gracchi, distinguished for their eloquence, had imbibed the rudiments of the Roman tongue.[1] Yet, according to the ancient usage, the child had always been removed from the women's chamber at seven years; and it cannot be pretended that the training of the first seven years of life could have laid deep the foundations either of the moral or the intellectual character. Indeed even the women, thus specially mentioned, were exceptions to the mass of the untutored matrons of Rome. Many mothers never taught their children anything up to the age of seven, and it was not unusual, nor undefended by some on principle, to leave them to learn even the rudiments of reading from the pedagogue after that epoch was passed.[2] This complaint, then, which is particularly advanced in the juvenile work of Tacitus (for, as his, I think, the *Treatise on Orators* should be recognised), was, in fact, unfounded. The real quarrel, however, of the conservatives to whom he belonged, was with the practice,

Complaints of the state of patrician education.

[1] Tac. *de Orator.* 28, 29.

[2] See Quintilian, *Inst. Orat.* i. 1., who, however, objects to the practice.

introduced in the last age of the republic, of sending children to public schools instead of keeping them under tutors at home. Domestic tuition, the necessity of an early stage of society, seemed more dignified and aristocratic; it savoured of the idea that letters were a craft and mystery; that the learning of the noble was a privilege, not to be freely communicated to all classes; and on this account, unconsciously perhaps, it found patrons among the patriots of the imperial era, the upholders of every republican prejudice. It was easy then, as now, to point out the superficial evils of public education, the conceit and ostentation it may foster; but the patrician clung with peculiar tenacity to his cherished isolation and reserve, the qualities which, in his view, most proudly distinguished the high-born Roman from the Greeks, the Orientals, and the vulgar all over the world. Whatever tended to place the young noble on an equality with other men, to imbue him with liberal feelings, to break down the pride of caste and the traditions of antique usage, among which he had been born, was regarded by the purists of the empire with suspicion and dislike. A society which had no other safeguard but blind habit, might naturally be alarmed at anything which tended to innovation; but a few only of the most thoughtful of the nation perceived the downward progress of society around them; and even they too often mistook or misrepresented its causes.

Augustus compromises between public and private education.

Augustus, it is curious to remark, discovered means, in his usual spirit of compromise, of reconciling both the conflicting systems of education which he found in action. In his day, a certain Verrius Flaccus was a noted preceptor, and kept a school much resorted to by the young nobility. The emperor invited this teacher to undertake the education of his grandsons; but for this purpose he required him to remove his benches

into the palace itself and limit the number of his pupils.[1] This, indeed, was probably a solitary attempt to give to the children of the ruling family the stimulus of competition in a class. For them, with this exception, the old haughty fashion of solitary teaching was, as far as we can learn, still maintained. The children of Drusus and Germanicus seem to have been instructed in the pomp of antique exclusiveness, under the eye of pedagogues at home; and such was apparently the case with the young Domitius also.

Principles of education adopted by Seneca for his pupil Nero.

Tiberius had betrayed a base jealousy of his grandchild Caius; but Claudius, still following the example of his illustrious ancestor, had shown no disposition to restrict the education of the son of Agrippina. It was the complaint of the day, that at a more advanced stage, everything was sacrificed to the study of rhetoric; and that the science of moral philosophy, which, in better times, had been conjoined with more practical training, was now entirely abandoned, as producing no immediate and tangible results. The most eloquent teachers deserted the less fashionable branch of instruction, and the *care of morals* fell into the hands of a lower class of teachers.[2] Yet it may be doubted whether this complaint was generally well founded; it is allowed, at least, that a reaction speedily followed, and professors of philosophy were soon found to teach the old course of ethical speculation, who rejected as frivolous the charms of oratory formerly used to embellish it.[3] But neither

[1] Suet. *de Illustr. Gramm.* 17.

[2] See Quintil. *l. c.*: "Nam ut lingua primum cœpit esse in quæstu, institutumque eloquentiæ donis male uti, curam morum qui diserti habebantur reliquerunt. Ea vero destituta infirmioribus ingeniis velut prædæ fuit."

[3] Ibid.: "Contempto dicendi labore bartem tamen potiorem, si dividi posset, retinuerunt."

the one fault nor the other could be imputed to the master who was chosen, as we have seen, to form the mind and unfold the abilities of the young Domitius. L. Annæus Seneca, the son of the rhetorician Marcus, presents us with our completest specimen of the professed philosopher of antiquity. He was neither a statesman who indulged in moral speculation, like Cicero, nor a private citizen who detached himself, like Epicurus or Zeno, from the ordinary duties of life, to devote himself to the pursuit of abstract truth. To teach and preach philosophy in writing, in talking, in his daily life and conversation, was, indeed, the main object he professed; but he regarded all public careers as practical developments of moral science, and plumed himself on showing that thought may, in every case, be combined with action. His father, Marcus, in the course of a long life of successful teaching, may possibly have amassed a fortune; and his brother was adopted by a brilliant, and perhaps a wealthy declaimer. It is not unlikely, therefore, that Seneca inherited a good patrimony: nevertheless he must have found means of improving it very early, if the story be true, that the emperor Caius had marked him for death on account of his possessions. He continued, no doubt, to make the most of the favour of the great and powerful. If, in his precepts, he inculcates, with the Stoics, indifference to worldly advantages, the spirit he illustrated in his life was that of an earnest man of business. If he shrank from the profession of arms, and if even his eloquence was confined to speculative discussions, he played the true Roman in the art of making money beget money. At a time when the philosophers fell too generally into the error of dissuading men from the toils and perils of a public career, it was well that Seneca's precepts were not too strictly enforced by his own practice. His instructions were,

on the whole, the best perhaps that could at that time have been imparted to a royal pupil. Both in sentiment and action, Seneca, with all his faults, rose no doubt far above the ordinary pedagogues of the day, the cringing slave, or the flattering freedman, to whom the young patricians were, for the most part, consigned. Doubtless, it was Seneca's principle of education to allure, possibly to coax, rather than drive, his pupil into virtue. He yielded on many points in order to borrow influence on others. He deigned to purchase the youth's attention to severer studies, by indulging his inclination to some less worthy amusements. To teach Nero eloquence and philosophy, it might be necessary to connive at his relaxations in singing, piping, and dancing. These were the recreations to which he most earnestly devoted himself, in which he believed himself to excel, and in which he acquired a tolerable proficiency: to make sonorous verses was not beyond his ability; but when he harangued, his tutor, we have seen, was obliged to compose his orations for him. Yet we might possibly find, were the truth known, that his able predecessors had not trusted, in their first juvenile efforts, entirely to their own abilities. The attainments just mentioned would, no doubt, be frivolous in any man in princely station; and, it must be added, that in a Roman noble they were worse than frivolous, branded as they were by public opinion, the opinion at least of the best men, as culpable. Nevertheless, it was something to occupy the mind of a ruler of millions with any taste that was harmless and bloodless. Even the morose old Romans did not deny that music and singing were humanizing arts; they rather protested against humanity being made an object of instruction at all to the lords and conquerors of mankind.

In the midst however of creatures and sycophants,

and the vilest instruments of his elders' pleasures, the young noble could not fail to be affected by the most fatal influences. From childhood he was steeped in enervating indulgences: the softness with which he was habitually treated, the delicacies with which he was pampered, relaxed the nerves both of his mind and body.[1] Clothed in purple and the gaudiest trappings, he was imbued with the vice of personal ostentation, and led step by step to the most inordinate desires. The growing youth reclined indolently on beds of down. His palate, in the phrase of Quintilian, was educated before his lips and tongue: the sensual tastes were cultivated before the moral. The kitchen was more frequented than the lecture room.[2] Impertinence and immodesty were encouraged, the one by applause, the other by example.[3] The child soon followed his father to the theatres and the circus, the schools of all that was exciting to the worst passions; and, under the stimulus thus prematurely given, learnt to be a man before he had experienced the preparatory training of boyhood.[4]

Vicious moral training of the young nobles.

The feelings with which the youthful heir to the purple may generally be supposed to have entered on his succession, are picturesquely described by the poet

[1] Quintil. i. 2.: "Nostros amicos, nostros concubinos vident; omne convivium obscœnis cantilenis strepit; pudenda dictu spectantur. Fit ex his consuetudo, deinde natura." . . . . . "Infantiam statim deliciis solvimus. Mollis illa educatio, quam indulgentiam vocamus, nervos omnes et mentis et corporis frangit." . . . . . "Quid non adultus concupiscet qui in purpuris repit?" . . . . . "In lecticis crescunt." . . . . . "Ante palatum eorum quam os instituimus."

[2] Senec. *Ep.* 95.: "In rhetorum et philosophorum scholis solitudo est; et quam celebres culinæ sunt; quanta circa nepotum focos juventus strepit!"

[3] Senec. *Const. Sap.* 41. 12.; Tac. *de Orat.* 29.: "Per quæ paulatim impudentia irrepsit et sui alienique contemptus."

[4] Tac. *l. c.*: "Histrionalis furor et gladiatorum equorumque studia, quibus occupatus et obsessus animus quantulum loci bonis artibus relinquit?"

Statius. *The child of the Persian Achæmenes balances, in joy and fear, the pleasures and the risks of sovereignty: Will his nobles continue faithful? will his people obey the rein? to whom shall he entrust the marches of the Euphrates? who shall keep for him the Caspian gates? He shrinks from the mighty bow of his father, and scarce dares to press his charger: the sceptre seems too heavy for his grasp; his brows have not yet grown to the compass of the tiara.*[1] Such was the constant condition of Oriental sovereignty; nor need the description be materially modified to suit the inheritance of the Cæsars. While conspiracies were rife against the reigning emperor, the presumptive heir was generally regarded with hope and affection. But his accession might at once direct every evil passion against himself; the senators might forget their oaths, the commons murmur at authority; and the chiefs of the legions on every frontier might corrupt the temper of the soldiers. If the genius of Nero's next predecessor was not fitted to dismay him by the grandeur of its proportions, he would still remember that he was the heir of Augustus and Julius, that he had succeeded to all their power, with none of their experience, and but little of their abilities. But it was within the palace, and amongst the members of his own family, that his perils chiefly lay. Those who were nearest to him might be the nearest objects of his distrust and apprehension. Agrippina and Britannicus were more

Perils which surrounded the young emperor. A. D. 54. A. U. 807.

[1] Stat. *Theb.* viii. 286.:

"Sicut Achæmenius solium gentesque paternas
Excepit si forte puer, cui vivere patrem
Tutius, incerta formidine gaudia librat,
An fidi proceres, ne pugnet vulgus habenis;
Cui latus Euphratis, cui Caspia limina mandet:
Sumere tunc arcus ipsumque onerare veretur
Patris equum; visusque sibi nec sceptra capaci
Sustentare manu, nec adhuc implere tiaram."

formidable to him than Suetonius or Corbulo. His best counsellors early warned him against the dangerous encroachments of the first; of the second he learned to be jealous at least from the day of his accession. When Nero walked across the court of the palace leaning on the arm of Burrhus, to show himself to the prætorians, and solicit their support, his chief anxiety was to anticipate the claims of his half-brother. Though admitted himself by adoption into the reigning family, the sacred stock of the Claudii and the Julii, and thus become in a legal sense the eldest scion and legitimate heir of the Cæsarean house, he felt that a legal fiction could not extinguish the natural sense of right, and that still to the mass of the citizens Britannicus must appear the true representative of the father from whose loins he sprang. The stern self-repression of the Roman character, which had schooled itself to accept mere legal adoption as equivalent to blood-descent, had at length given way. Nature had reasserted her sway, and resented in thousands of bosoms the recognition of the child of Domitius as the eldest born of Claudius.[1]

Struggle for influence over Nero: the senate, the tutor, the mother.

Now however, more than ever, would the ribald stories against the wretched Messalina come into play. This was the moment when the sneers, retailed by a later generation, against the noble, *the highborn* Britannicus, would have their deepest significance.[2] These were the insinuations which now supported the tottering principle of the law, and seemed to justify the resolve of

[1] In the time of Dion the superiority of natural over legal descent seems to have been generally acknowledged. That writer begins his account of Nero's reign by declaring that Britannicus, as the legitimate, ought to have succeeded in place of Nero, the adopted son (lxi. 1.): *ἐκ δὲ δὴ τοῦ νόμου*, he adds, *καὶ τῷ Νέρωνι διὰ τὴν ποίησιν ἐπέβαλλεν.*

[2] Juvenal, vi. 124.: "Ostenditque tuum, generose Britannice, ventrem."

the soldiers. When the prætorians, prepared perhaps by Burrhus, had taken the part of the pretender, every popular scruple was speedily repressed. Law and the sword had both declared on his side; natural affection or respect, alone arrayed against them, shrank from the unequal contest, or yielded to the representations speciously palmed upon it. It was not worth while to contend for the heritage of a youth whose real parentage was obscured by such suspicions. To the ruling class, at all events, the dogmas of the law presented a sufficient plea for acquiescence: the nobles of Rome were little disposed to risk their heads for a sentiment of justice or compassion. As long as he governed with decent respect to the pretensions of his nobility, Nero might regard himself as secure against the open rivalry of Britannicus: should he ever raise the alarm of the senate, then indeed the scion of the genuine Claudian stock might furnish a name to inscribe on the banner of a new revolution. The senate, with the instinct of selfish cowardice, fancied itself strong in the weakness of its ruler's title. The prince's advisers anxious for their charge, anxious for themselves, anxious also, we may believe, for the good of the commonwealth, took advantage of this state of affairs to promote good government, to make it the interest of all classes to maintain him. But it was easier to conciliate the senate and the people than to secure the confidence of the prince himself; to maintain their ascendancy over him against every rival; to guide his ardent and susceptible feelings into safe channels; above all, to supplant the influence of his mother, and prevent her from extending to his maturer years the authority she had exerted over his infancy. The woman who had subverted Messalina, who had murdered Claudius, who had removed from her path every rival without compunction, was resolved no doubt to hold fast the power to which she had waded through so much

blood. It was not for Nero that she had plunged into this sea of crimes; however she might disguise it to her own conscience, her ambition was for herself more than for her son. She had already played the imperator before the legions in the camp: she would not now resign the part to the stripling who occupied the palace. With this view Agrippina now leagued herself with the freedmen of the court, especially with Pallas, whose immense wealth, whose craft and long acquaintance with the springs of government, seemed to make him a more useful ally than the pedantic philosopher, or the rude captain. Though all-powerful with Claudius, Pallas seems from an early period to have become distasteful to Nero, who had at least the merit of rising above the flatteries of slaves and freedmen. Docile as he was to Burrhus and Seneca, and easily cowed by the arrogance of his mother, against Pallas alone he evinced spirit and independence. To Agrippina, indeed, he was still fondly devoted. The first act of his reign was to demand fresh honours and compliments for her, and his first watchword, *The best of mothers*, was inspired probably by genuine affection.[1] From the camp the prætorians bore him into the senate house, demanding by signs if not by words that he should be accepted as chief of the state; and before evening all the honours of empire were heaped upon him, of which he declined alone the title of Father of his Country. Of the testament of Claudius no notice was taken; nor are we informed what its provisions really were. Had it declared Nero the heir, it would of course have been duly recited. The funeral oration of the deceased was spoken, as might be expected, by his successor in person; an oration which Seneca was believed to have composed for him, and which displayed more graces

Nero pronounces the funeral oration over Claudius.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 2.; Suet. *Ner.* 9.

of style than could be anticipated from the stripling himself. The mention it made of the late emperor's birth, and the triumphs of his ancestors, was received with marked attention; for in these family records the Romans took a national pride. They listened with respect to the boast of his learning, and to the assertion, true and honourable as it was, that his reign had been sullied by no external calamity. But when the speaker passed, by a natural transition, to the praise of his wisdom and discretion, the multitude burst into laughter. They had been wont, in the exuberant licence of the forum, to make Claudius their butt, and this scornful humour they had so long been permitted to indulge, that they could not now lay it aside when a last act of tardy justice was demanded of them. At the same time more thoughtful men remarked that Nero was the first of their princes who had needed help in making a speech. It was a painful token of the degradation into which they had fallen. If Nero was but seventeen years of age, Cæsar declaimed in the forum at twelve, Augustus at nineteen. Tiberius was a practised orator. Caius, the madman, could harangue the senate with grace and vigour; even Claudius could speak with elegance after due preparation. But Nero, they remarked, with a sigh or a sneer, had been directed to other studies. Sculpture and painting, singing and driving, such were the arts on which his sensibility had been occupied; yet in the occasional composition of verses it was allowed that he had shown himself not deficient in the elements of polite learning.[1]

Favourable impression made by his first speech to the senate.

From the Campus the orator returned to the senate house, and expounded to his nobles the principles of government he had been taught to prescribe to himself. They were not offended by his placing the *authority of the*

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 3.: "Cælare, pingere, cantus aut regimen equorum exercere; et aliquando, carminibus pangendis, inesse sibi elementa doctrinæ ostendebat."

senate on the same footing with the *consent of the soldiers;* and he made a favourable impression by reminding them that his youth had been implicated in no civil or domestic discords; he had no injuries to avenge, no enmities to prosecute. He promised to reject the most odious instruments of preceding administrations; he would not affect, like Claudius, to be the judge of all affairs in person, a pretence which could only result in throwing power into the hands of irresponsible assessors. In his household no office should be put up to sale; between his family and his people he would always scrupulously distinguish. The senate should retain all its prescriptive functions. Italy and the domains of the Roman people should look to the tribunals for justice. For himself he would confine his care to the provinces over which he was set to wield the sword of military command. This speech filled the senators with hopes of a mild administration: they decreed, in their joy, that the harangue should be engraved on silver, and recited annually on the accession of the consuls.[1] At the same time their new ruler allowed them to act with some show of independence. They hastened to profit by this brief respite to flout the system of delation from which they had so much suffered. With this view, apparently, they repealed the permission Claudius had given to accept fees and rewards for pleading causes.[2] And further, they relieved the quæstors designate from the burden of exhibiting gladiatorial shows, which the late emperor, in his zeal for the diversions of the populace, had laid upon them. But Agrippina pretended to complain, as though it were meant to *abolish the acts* of her hus-

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 4.; Suet. *Ner.* 10.; Dion, lxi. 3.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 5.: "Ne quis ad causam orandam mercede aut donis emeretur." At a later period Nero seems to have restored the wiser provisions of Claudius. See Suet. *Ner.* 17.: "Ut litigatores pro patrociniis certam justamque mercedem darent."

band; and she had influence enough with her son to make him convene the senators within the walls of the palace, where, though unable to control their proceedings, she could at least hear their deliberations from behind a curtain. Nor did she deign always to practise even this slight reserve. On one occasion, when an embassy from Armenia was awaiting audience, she prepared to seat herself beside the emperor; nor, dismayed though they were at this unprecedented arrogance, did the courtiers venture to interfere till Seneca whispered to the prince to descend himself and, under pretence of filial duty, meet her at the foot of the throne.

Arrogant behaviour of Agrippina.

Not the demeanour only, but the acts of Agrippina, might now justly cause alarm. From the day of her son's elevation she seemed resolved to play the empress. She was borne in the same litter with him, or he walked by her side while she proudly rode aloft.[1] To mark the unity of place and purpose between herself and him, she caused coins to be stamped, on which the heads of both were conjoined.[2] She gave answers to ambassadors, and sent despatches to foreign courts.[3] She directed, without the emperor's privity, the murder of M. Silanus, proconsul of Asia. This man was accounted stupid and harmless; he had caused no apprehension to the most jealous rulers, and Caius Caligula had been used to call him in contempt the *golden sheep*. But Agrippina feared that even his sluggish temper might be roused to avenge the murder of his brother Lucius, whom she had put out of the way before, as a possible rival to her son. Marcus Silanus was now removed by poison, administered by her agents, with hardly an attempt at disguise.[4] But the news of this crime could not reach

[1] Dion, lxi. 3.; Suet. *Ner.* 9.

[2] See Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* vi. 257. [3] Dion, *l. c.*

[4] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 1. The mother of the two Silani was a daughter of Julia and Lucius Paulus (Suet. *Oct.* 64.), possibly Æmilia Lepida

Rome for some months, and the destruction of Narcissus, whom meanwhile she drove to death by cruel treatment in prison, was not regarded generally with disfavour. The senate and people were not yet alarmed. Burrhus alone and Seneca were startled at this virtual assumption of the power of life and death, conceded only to the emperors as a state necessity, and now, it was hoped, for ever abandoned even by them. They opposed themselves to her plans of personal cruelty and vengeance, and exerted themselves in strict alliance, to undermine the influence she still possessed over her son. There was little indeed in common in the character of the two associates. Burrhus was noted for his military bluntness, his sense of discipline and decorum, while Seneca was a courtier in manners, and affected to combine the man of the world with the philosopher. But the necessities of their position bound them closely together, and we may allow that both were equally disposed to form their pupil's mind, as far as possible, to virtue. They agreed, however, that a youth of his temper and in his position could be but imperfectly trained; and they agreed in the slippery policy of winking at some forms of vice, or even enticing him to them, in order to divert him from more pernicious foibles, or crimes of deeper dye.[1]

Close alliance of Seneca and Burrhus against her.

The readiest means of weaning the young man from his childish dependence on his mother was to occupy him with an amorous intrigue. Nero was already betrothed to his half-sister Octavia; but this victim of family policy was unable

Nero's intrigue with the freedwoman, Acte.

by name (Suet. *Claud.* 26.); their father was App. Junius Silanus, killed by Claudius (Suet. *Claud.* 29.); and L. Silanus, one of the brothers, had been betrothed to Octavia, the sister of Britannicus. This near connexion with the imperial family, and the popular mutterings that he would make a better successor to Claudius than the stripling Nero, moved the jealousy of Agrippina against him. See Tac. *l. c.* and Ritter's note.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 2.: "Juvantes invicem, quo facilius lubricam principis ætatem, si virtutem aspernaretur, voluptatibus concessis retinerent."

to attract his affections, which were still free for another engagement. The care of his tutors was directed only to guard him from the fascinations of noble matrons, and avert the scandal of illegitimate connexions; and apparently without attempting to recall him to a sense of duty to his spouse, they were well pleased to see him devote himself, with the ardour of a first illusion, to the charms of a Greek freedwoman named Acte. The confidants of this amour were two companions a little above his own age, Salvius Otho and Claudius Senecio, of whom the first was of distinguished family, the second the son of a freedman of the court; but both were notorious profligates, whose influence with him his mother had already noticed, and tried in vain to avert. Their power seemed confirmed by their participation in this secret (for the bashful youth still hoped it was a secret) and Agrippina was alarmed

Behaviour of Agrippina.

and incensed. Instead of biding the effects of possession on a first childish passion, she proclaimed to all around her indignation and fear, execrating in the coarsest terms the *freedwoman who dared to be her rival*, the *handmaid who aspired to be her daughter-in-law*. This violence overshot its mark, and threw the frightened and irritated youth into the arms of Seneca, who contrived to cast a veil over the intrigue, by finding a pretended lover for the object of his devotion. The mother now saw her mistake. Changing her tactics, she began to bid against the tutor by still greater indulgences, offering her own bosom for the secret confidences of his passion, her own apartment for the gratification of his impatient, but still timid, desires. She deigned to apologize for her undue severity, and opened freely to his generous profusion the stores of her private coffers, which were hardly inferior to his own. But Nero was not so deceived: his advisers would not suffer him to be deceived. Indeed, such was the temper of Agrippina, that she could not long persist

in the pretence of submission and indulgence, and Nero was mortified at her openly spurning the presents he made her, saying that he had nothing to give which she had not herself given to him.[1]

Accordingly the influence of Seneca and Burrhus continued to rise. The confederates were far more wary in their proceedings. Their plan, as has been said, was to govern Nero by yielding to him, and they justified to themselves their tolerance of his failings by the assurance that they should thus save him from vices more odious and more fatal. The errors of Nero assumed gradually a deeper dye; his passions blossomed in vice, and bore fruit in crime; yet the downward progress was not precipitate; it was susceptible of palliation and disguise; it lurked long among the secrets of the palace, or was whispered only within the precincts of the court. High as the great Stoic philosopher strained the principles of virtue in his sublimest exhortations, he often acknowledged, in descending to a lower level, that for his own part he aspired only to be not the worst among bad men. *To the student,* he says, *who professes his wish and hope to rise to a loftier grade of virtue, I would answer that this is my* wish *also, but I dare not* hope *it. I am pre-occupied with vices. All I require of myself is, not to be equal to the best, but only to be better than the bad.*[2] He preached, he owns, more rigidly than he practised. But such confessions must not be regarded as the simple outpouring of conscious infirmity. We cannot doubt, from the general context of the speaker's declamations, that they are meant to disguise a considerable amount of self-satisfaction; that Seneca, like many preachers of virtue and holiness, while he professed to sigh over his own weakness on some points, was

Nero's gradual progress in vice—disguised by his ministers.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 13.: "Dividere filium quæ cuncta ex ipsa haberet.

[2] Senec. *Epist.* 75.; *de Vit. Beat.* 17.

convinced that in repudiating vices which were in truth less congenial to him, he was soaring far above the level of ordinary humanity. The morality he impressed upon Nero was such as this: *Be courteous and moderate; shun cruelty and rapine; abstain from blood:*—there was no difficulty in this to a young and popular prince, flattered on all sides, and abounding in every means of enjoyment:—*Compensate yourself with the pleasures of youth without compunction; amuse yourself, but hurt no man.* It required no philosopher to give these lessons; and it may be questioned whether the comparative innocence of the young man's early indulgences would have been exchanged for grosser enormities under more vulgar tuition.

Seneca's praise of Nero's clemency.

So, too, the praise of clemency which Seneca resounds in Nero's ears in the first year of his power, might be received with little emotion by one who had not yet felt the tyrant's inducements to cruelty. He regarded himself with complacency in the glass which, as Seneca expresses it, was there set up to reflect him. Let him turn his eyes, says the philosopher, on the great mass of mankind, wicked, turbulent, ready at any moment to reduce the world to anarchy, could it only succeed in breaking the imperial yoke imposed on its evil passions. Let him reflect that he has been chosen from the whole race of man to enact the part of God upon earth; he is the arbiter of life and death, of every fortune and position. *These thousands of swords,* let him say, *which my Peace retains in their scabbards, are ready to leap forth at my nod: what nations shall be destroyed, or what removed; who shall be freed and who enslaved; what kings shall be enthroned or dethroned; what cities built or razed; all belongs to my absolute decision. Possessed of all this power, no anger has impelled me to the infliction of unjust punishments; no youthful*

heat of mine, no rashness or contumacy of my people, no, nor yet the too common pride of proving the extent of my power, has tempted me to wanton violence. This day, if the gods require it, I am prepared to read before them the roll of all the subjects they have given me charge of. . . . This, O Cæsar, he continues, *you may boldly affirm, that none of the things which have fallen into your hands, have you by force or by fraud usurped. Innocence, the rarest merit of princes, innocence is yours. You have your reward. No man was ever so dear to his friend, as you are to the Roman people. Henceforth none will quote the conduct of the divine Augustus, or the first years of Tiberius: none will look beyond yourself for an example of virtue: we shall gauge the remainder of your principate by the flavour of your first twelvemonth.*[1] From this last expression it appears that the tract was composed towards the end of Nero's first year of government, and up to that period at least, according to the writer's testimony, his administration had been unsullied by cruelty or any glaring crime. Yet the evidence of history cannot be set aside which declares that it had already been disgraced by a deed of the most heinous dye; and whatever might be its general colour thus far, this deed alone was enough to suffuse it with an indelible stain.

Disgrace of Pallas: alarm and menaces of Agrippina. A. D. 55. A. U. 808.

It would seem that Agrippina's intrigues to recover her influence in the palace had met with little success. While still sparing his mother from the feelings of fear or respect which had not yet lost all their force, he intimated his dissatisfaction by removing the favourites on whose counsels she leaned, or by whose hands she

[1] Senec. *de Clementia*, i. 1.: "Principatus tuus ad *anni gustum* exigitur." Such is the admirable reading elicited by Lipsius from the MS. ad *augustum*, which, though conjectural, seems sufficiently certain.

acted. He disgraced Pallas, who had acted as the chief minister of Claudius, and now demanded of the new emperor a pledge that no inquiry should be made into his transactions in that capacity; that all accounts, as he phrased it, between himself and the state should be considered as settled. Deprived of his offices, and dismissed from court, he was exposed shortly afterwards to a charge of conspiring against the emperor, from which Seneca himself defended him. But meanwhile his disgrace alone sufficed to arouse the terrors of Agrippina. Forgetting her recent dissimulation, she gave vent to furious menaces and reproaches. Mortified at the growing influence of her son's tutors, she had intimated to him that it was to her he owed the empire: she now went further, and let him understand not less plainly that she had the means of withdrawing it again.[1] The patroness of Pallas declared aloud that Britannicus, now approaching his fourteenth birthday, was arrived at manhood[2]: she proclaimed him the genuine offspring and natural heir of Claudius, and threatened to divulge openly the secret horrors of the palace, to avow the iniquity of her marriage, and even confess the murder of her husband. But whatever, she said, were her crimes, one thing more she had done: she had preserved the life of her stepson. Now she would rush with him to the camp. The soldiers should decide between the daughter of Germanicus and the wretched Burrhus and Seneca, who presumed, forsooth, to sway the empire of the world, the one with his maimed hand, the other with his glib professor's tongue. Thus saying, she clenched her hand in an

[1] Dion, lxi. 7.

[2] I suppose him to have been born in the first year of Claudius, the twentieth day of his reign, *i. e.* February 12. 794. Suet. *Claud.* 27. But this writer is wrong in placing this date in the *second* consulship of Claudius. Tacitus, again, is in error in saying that Nero was only two years his senior. He must have been the elder by more than three years. See *Ann.* xii. 25.

attitude of menace, and stormed with bitter curses, adjuring the spirit of the deified Claudius, and the shades of the murdered Silani, and the victims of all the crimes she had herself, now it seemed in vain, committed.[1]

Nero's plea for the murder of Britannicus.

That Nero should be alarmed at this defiance was only natural: we cannot doubt that it now first impressed him with a sense of the danger to be apprehended from his mother's temper, and made him feel that while Britannicus lived his own life and throne were in her power.[2] He had assumed the purple, as we have seen, in October. Already, before the end of the year, in the third month of his reign, whether from rising jealousy towards him, or from mere capricious ill-humour, he had insulted the poor child in the presence of his boon companions. At a supper he gave during the Saturnalian festival in December, he had taken occasion, as *king of the feast*, to mortify his bashful timidity by requiring him to stand up and sing before the company. Even the half-tipsy revellers had been shocked at this indignity, for as such it was regarded, and expressed still more pointedly their compassion when Britannicus chanted a lyric stave on the sorrows of the discrowned and disinherited.[3] The emperor was disconcerted; he began to brood from this time over the specious claims of the pretender, and Agrippina's threats satisfied him that they were really formidable. Yet he could make as yet no public

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 14.: "Audiretur hinc Germanici filia, inde vilis rursus Burrhus et exul Seneca trunca scilicet manu et professoria lingua generis humani regimen expostulantes." We do not know whether the "trunca manus" refers to an actual mutilation, or is merely figurative.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 18.

[3] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 15.: "Exorsus est carmen, quo evolutum cum sede patria rebusque summis significabatur." Suetonius repeats what may be called an idle insinuation, that Nero put Britannicus to death from jealousy of his skill in singing. *Ner.* 33.

charge against him, and he did not venture to command his execution, unarraigned and unconvicted. He resolved, we are assured, to take him off privily; and engaged a tribune of the guards, named Pollio, to devise safe and secret means. The infamous Locusta, who was at the moment in custody on a charge of poisoning, was taken into counsel. All the attendants who loved the poor youth had long since been removed from about him. There was no hand to intercept the noxious potions which were administered to him by his own tutors. But the poison seemed to fail of its effect, and Nero grew impatient.[1] He stormed at the tribune, he menaced the poisoner, as traitors to his cause, and interested only in averting suspicion from themselves. They promised to serve him faithfully the next time; the poison was now prepared in the palace itself under the emperor's own eyes, and he was assured that it would cause death as swiftly as steel itself.[2] Confident of the result, he contrived his crime with an audacity perhaps unparalleled. Britannicus was seated, as still a minor, at the table where the younger scions of the imperial family partook of their simpler meal together, while their elders banqueted in full state beside them. There the warm wine-cup was

Britannicus is poisoned.

[1] Sir G. Cornewall Lewis remarks on the failure of the first attempt to poison Claudius, as a proof that the art was not so well understood at this time at Rome as in certain periods of modern history. *Early Roman History*, ii. 485. note. Here is a second instance of such inexperience. We must be the more cautious, therefore, how we trust to the many rumours of poisoning accredited by the Roman writers.

[2] Suetonius adds various particulars to the account of Tacitus. Nero, he says, called Locusta to him, abused and struck her, declaring that she had given an antidote instead of poison. When she excused herself, affirming that she had made the dose weak the better to disguise the crime: *As if*, he exclaimed, *I feared the Julian law* (against murderers and poisoners)! He then caused her to prepare the potion in his own apartments, and tried it on various animals, till he found it strong enough to kill a young pig instantaneously.

tasted in due course, and presented to him. He found it too hot, and in the drop of cold water which was infused into it so deadly a poison was conveyed, that the child, on swallowing it, fell back lifeless without a word or a groan. All the guests beheld it. Some rushed in terror from the apartment; others, warier and more collected, still kept their seats, and bent their eyes on Nero. He, without rising from his couch, assured them placidly that such were the fits to which his brother was subject, and that his senses would soon return. The body was removed: the guests addressed themselves, as they were bidden, again to the banquet; but the alarm and horror of Agrippina, remembering perhaps the scene which had occurred four months earlier in that festive hall, were so marked, that it was clear to all that she at least was guiltless of this crime; while the wretched Octavia, with the self-control which long necessity had taught her, suppressed all signs of emotion, and betrayed neither grief nor affection nor fear. That same night the corpse of Britannicus was consumed; his simple pyre had been prepared, it seems, beforehand. The obsequies took place in the Campus Martius, in the midst of a sudden tempest, betokening to the citizens the divine indignation at a deed of blood which men had generally agreed to excuse as a state necessity.[1] The accounts which Dion followed added a further horror to the scene, declaring that the rain washed off the paint with which the body had been coloured, and disclosed the livid stains of poison. In a winter's night, amidst the smoke of half-extinguished torches, such an incident could hardly have been observable.[2]

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 18.; Suet. *Ner.* 33. Suetonius, however, says that the funeral followed the next day.

[2] Dion, lxi. 7. This assassination probably took place immediately after the birthday of Britannicus, the 12th, as before observed, of February.

From first to last every circumstance connected with this hideous fratricide was carried out with the same coolness and calculating prevision. No long-experienced adept in crimes of state could have acted with more consummate art than the timid stripling before us, who blushed at being discovered in the embrace of a freedwoman. No sooner were the hasty obsequies completed, than an edict followed in which their haste was excused and defended by argument and example. Nero adroitly seized this occasion to recommend himself to the citizens whose sensibility he had outraged. Having lost, he said, the support of a dear brother, he must now look for aid and sympathy to the republic itself. He claimed a deeper interest in the affections of his people, since he had become the last of the imperial stock, the sole remaining hope of a nation to whom the blood of Cæsar was dear. The emperor completed his crime by showering presents, houses, and estates on the favourites of the palace: among them were some, at least, whose professions of superior gravity made their participation in these spoils, for as such they were regarded, peculiarly invidious.[1] The hand of a master of state-craft can hardly be mistaken throughout these proceedings; and there is one only, as far as we can judge, to whom it can be reasonably ascribed. Posterity, while it shrinks from condemning, must not venture to acquit him.[2] At all events, we have seen that, much later than this, the clemency of Nero's

Grounds for imputing this crime to the advice of Seneca.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 18. In this remark the interpreters have generally supposed that he points at Seneca. Suetonius (*l. c.*) says that Locusta was rewarded with large estates, and it has been supposed, but his expression has perhaps been misinterpreted, that she was provided with pupils to be instructed in the state mystery of poisoning. "Locustæ pro navata opera impunitatem prædiaque ampla *sed et* discipulos dedit."

[2] We need pay no attention, I think, to the charges of Dion against Seneca (lxi. 10.), which seem animated with more than his usual malignity against men of reputation for virtue, and miss, besides, the peculiar weaknesses which are justly imputable to him.

first year was celebrated by Seneca as the special glory of his own instructions. It is clear that, at least, after the deed was done, he consented to absolve the perpetrator, and to persuade the world, as far as his silence could avail to persuade it, either, that no murder had been committed, or that no defence was required for it.

Importance of making Nero's power secure. Seneca aims at making him popular with the senate.

The temptations under which the philosopher lay to this duplicity are sufficiently obvious. His influence could only be maintained by parrying the counter projects of Agrippina, and his influence once lost, there could be no more hope for Nero or for Rome, for himself no retreat but in absolute insignificance, could even that avail to save him. Undoubtedly his position was a trying one. He believed that his power at court enabled him to direct the empire for the general welfare. The common weal was, after all, the grand object of the heroes of Roman story. Few of the renowned of old had attained their eminence as public benefactors, without steeling their hearts against the purest instincts of nature. The deeds of a Brutus or a Manlius, of a Sulla or a Cæsar, would have been branded as crimes in private citizens; it was the public character of the actors that stamped them with immortal glory in the eyes of their countrymen. Even Seneca, sage as he was, was not superior to the sophistry which might have justified the murder of Britannicus by the precedent of Romulus and Remus. Meanwhile he was studious in directing the public administration of his pupil to the general advantage of the empire, to the credit and advantage more particularly of the senatorial order, which was perhaps the best direction the government could at that moment take.[1] While it

[1] We may ascribe, perhaps, to the liberal views of the minister the geographical inquiries instituted by Nero in the direction of the Caspian Sea and the country of the Ethiopians (Plin. *H. N.* vi.

was the best for the people, it was, at the same time, the most prudent for the prince. A contented senate made a secure emperor. Claudius well understood this, and the favour he showed to this proud and privileged body was the secret of his immunity from senatorial conspiracies, and enabled him to quit the city for the provinces without apprehension, which Tiberius had never ventured to do. This policy was the most conducive also to the prince's reputation. The fame of Nero's five years rests mainly on the favour it obtained from a courted and therefore an indulgent senate. The fathers balanced against the crime of fratricide the fact that their chief had rejected statues of gold and silver; that he had refused to allow the year to commence with his own natal month of December, and retained the ancient solemnity of the Kalends of January; that he had checked with a gentle remonstrance the impetuous zeal which offered to swear to all his acts beforehand; that he had dismissed with contempt the charges of a delator against a knight and a senator.[1]

Division between Nero and Agrippina.

The schism between the mother and the son seemed now complete. Agrippina embraced the wretched orphan Octavia, and declared herself the protectress of her injured innocence. She called her friends into consultation in private: she collected money from all quarters with an avidity which indicated some political project. She cultivated the regard of military officers, and caressed the remnant of the ancient nobility, as if seeking to make

15. 35.), which were vulgarly supposed to be preparatory to some military enterprises. Comp. Senec. *Nat. Quæst.* vi. 8. The long digression of Lucan (*Phars.* x.) on the subject of the river Nile seems to indicate the interest of the best informed men of the empire, and particularly, perhaps, of his uncle Seneca, in these expeditions of discovery. The yearning for extended physical knowledge is one of the most curious features of Lucan's poem.

[1] Tac. *Ann* xiii. 10. Comp. Suet. *Ner.* 10. "Agenti Senatui gratias respondit: quum meruero."

a party and secure a chief for it. All this was disclosed to Nero, who retaliated first by withdrawing the guard by which the empress was attended, and then removing her from her apartments in the palace to the mansion formerly inhabited by Antonia, that the attendants at his own receptions might have no pretext for presenting themselves to her likewise. When he paid her a formal visit here, he was always escorted by a military guard, and restricted the interview to a brief salutation. This marked disfavour had a strong effect on the courtiers. The door of Agrippina became rapidly deserted. Of her ancient friends none but a few women continued to visit her. Among these was Junia Silana, the spouse of C. Silius, whom Messalina had required him to divorce, and who now, in constant hatred of the dead empress, still clung to the side of her rival and successor. Yet she had a feud with Agrippina also; for when she had proposed to solace herself with another marriage, it was Agrippina who had set the object of her choice against her; and her present attachment was only simulated with a view to vengeance. As soon as she was assured that the mother had lost all influence with her son, she seized the moment to strike. She suborned two confederates to denounce Agrippina as conspiring against the throne, and averred that it was her scheme to raise Rubellius Plautus, the son of Blandus, who stood in the same relationship to Augustus as Nero himself, first to empire and then to her own bed.[1] There was another woman in the plot. The pretended conspiracy was divulged to a freedman of Domitia, whose hostility to Agrippina

Her enemies intrigue against her.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 19. Rubellius Plautus was son of Rubellius Blandus (already mentioned in chap. xlvi.) and of Julia, daughter of Drusus, granddaughter of Tiberius. He was, therefore, through his grandmother, great-great-grandson of Augustus. Nero was great-great-grandson of Augustus through his grandfather Germanicus.

was well known; Domitia passed on the witnesses to Paris, a favourite of Nero; and late one night, in the sacred privacy of his carousal, the emperor was startled by the appearance of this confidential servant, with an assumed look of deep anxiety, and received intimation of the unnatural crime which was said to be meditated against him. The weak-spirited youth, whose nerves were already shaken with premature dissipation, believed without further inquiry, and would have yielded at once to the suggestions of his sudden alarm. He would have commanded not only the immediate execution of Plautus, but the removal of Burrhus from his military post, on the mere suspicion that, having been originally raised by Agrippina, he would be disposed now to support her. But these intrigues of the palace were, it is confessed, obscure even to the citizens at the time. Some writers affirmed that Burrhus was only kept in his place by the interposition of Seneca; while others, less notorious for their partiality to that statesman, made no mention of any doubt on Nero's part of the fidelity of Burrhus.[1] Yet all combined, without hesitation, in asserting that Nero was already willing and even anxious to rid himself of his mother, and was only deterred from at once commanding her death by the assurance of Burrhus that she should be sentenced judicially if the crime were proved against her. Every culprit, it was honestly insisted, might claim a hearing, and above all a parent. As yet there were no accusers, but merely a single informer against her; and he the emissary of a hostile house. Nero acquiesced, heavy perhaps with wine, and unaccustomed to argument.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 20.: "Fabius Rusticus auctor est . . . . spe Senecæ dignationem Burrho retentam. Plinius et Cluvius, nihil dubitatum de fide præfecti referunt. *Sane Fabius inclinat ad laudes Senecæ.*" The student of Tacitus will remark the numerous in-

This rapid consultation took place that night: the next morning Agrippina was required to hear the charge against her and refute it. Burrhus conducted the examination, and Seneca attended. Burrhus, anxious perhaps for himself, was violent and overbearing. All the spirit of the virago flashed out at once. She, too, spared neither sarcasms nor menaces. It was well, she said, for Silana, the childless, to suggest that she, a mother, had designs against the life of a son; as if mothers could put away their children as easily as strumpets their gallants. It was well for Domitia to vaunt her interest in Nero; she who was adorning her fishponds at Baiæ, while Agrippina was raising him to the family of the Cæsars, to the proconsular Potestas, to the hope and promise of the Consulship. And then she demanded an interview with the emperor in person, relying on the power of a mother's indignation or despair; and without deigning to assert her innocence, as if distrusting, nor to urge her claims, as if reproaching him, she bluntly required the punishment of her accusers, and the reward of her faithful adherents.

Agrippina defends herself with spirit.

The hardihood of Agrippina was crowned with more success than it merited. The charges against her were declared to be unfounded, and of those whom she denounced as the inventors of the calumny, Calvisius and Iturius were placed in distant confinement, the freedman Atimetus was put to death, while Silana herself was banished. Paris alone escaped free, by the special grace of the emperor, who admired his talents as an actor, and had received him into private intimacy. Rubellius himself, it seems, was not noticed at all. The favour

The charges against her are declared unfounded.

stances in which that author intimates his dislike to Seneca. He could not forgive him for his connexion with the monster Nero, who lived to be detested more than all their tyrants by the senate and aristocracy.

which Burrhus, the blunt uncourtly soldier, still retained, is even more remarkable. Not only were the insinuations levelled on this occasion against him disregarded, but when soon afterwards he was accused, together with Pallas, of intriguing for a Cornelius Sulla, he was allowed to take his place among the judges, and turn the charge against himself into a process against his accuser. Burrhus again, and Pallas under his wing, were triumphantly acquitted, while their assailant Pætus was himself condemned to banishment.[1]

Nero's dissolute amusements.

Such were the firmness and moderation of Nero's administration throughout the first model year of his principate; and for some years afterwards it continued to be conducted, for the most part, on similar principles. It was undoubtedly the administration, not of the young prince himself, but of the shrewd and thoughtful men to whom he had given his confidence; and Seneca deserves the praise of abstinence from bloodshed and violence, and a laudable care to retain his patron in the paths of ancient usage. The licence he meanwhile extended to his private amusements may readily be pardoned. If it was impossible to engage the light-minded youth in the details of business, there may have been no better course than to absorb him in frivolous pleasures, which should leave him neither leisure nor inclination to interfere with the government at all. Such seems to have been the view Seneca took of the alternative before him. But in after years the frivolity of Nero, and the vile character of his pastimes, seemed to have incensed the Romans against him no less than the tyranny which accompanied them: the dislike with which Seneca is regarded by Tacitus was caused perhaps

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 23. Faustus Cornelius Sulla was husband of Antonia, and son-in-law of Claudius, cons. A.U. 805, A.D. 52. *Ann.* xii. 52.

mainly by the belief that it was he who corrupted the principles of his tender charge, and undermined in him the stern simplicity of the Roman character. The carelessness with which Nero began soon to exhibit himself in the circus and the theatre will appear hereafter; but already in the second year of his reign he condescended to roam the streets disguised as a a slave, accompanied by his boon companions, snatching the wares exposed for sale, cuffing the angry owners and sometimes receiving blows in return.[1] These freaks soon became notorious, and many dissolute youths were encouraged by the example to perpetrate like excesses. But when Montanus, a senator, struck the emperor unawares in one of these nocturnal encounters, and, on discovering him, too openly begged his pardon, he received an order to kill himself. Thenceforth Nero took care to have soldiers always at hand to protect him. This taste for vulgar brawls induced him to foster the passions of the stage, until the licentiousness of the spectators became intolerable; and it was found necessary to expel the histrions, or pantomimic dancers, and to restore the guard, which, from the time of Augustus till recently, had kept the police of the theatres.[2]

A. D. 56. A. U. 809.

While such, however, were the early indications of a corrupt and feeble character which the young prince exhibited, to the sorrow of decent citizens, and alarm of the wiser and more thoughtful, various incidents in his ad-

Consecration of a temple to Claudius.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 25. We know not what exaggeration there may be in these stories. When after an evening's debauch Nero appeared next morning without any marks of injury on his visage, it was whispered that he had applied a lotion of sovereign efficacy to his skin, the ingredients of which were indicated with precision. Plin. *H. N.* xiii. 43.

[2] Tacitus says: "Non aliud remedium repertum est quam ut histriones Italia pellerentur, milesque theatro rursum insideret." The soldiers had been just before withdrawn. The histrions or mimes are to be distinguished from other performers. It was only the former

ministration recommended it strongly to different classes of his people. The populace, ever favourably impressed by marks of family affection, were pleased at the respect he seemed to show to the memory of his predecessor. Though they despised Claudius when alive, they acquiesced in the ascription of divine honours to him after death, and thought it highly becoming in his successor to build him a temple after the manner of his ancestors, and appoint a college of Claudian Flamens from among the highest families of the city.[1] Nor did Nero disdain to recognise the claims of his natural father, while paying these honours to the adoptive. He obtained a statue for Domitius from the senate. For Asconius Labeo, who had been his guardian after his father's death and still survived, he demanded the consular ornaments. This attention to the claims of others was accompanied by modesty in regard to himself. His liberality was eminently conspicuous. To preserve their rank to some impoverished senators, he endowed them with the census which the law required. At the same time he followed the example of Augustus and Claudius in respecting the prescriptions of the state religion. When the temples of Jupiter and Minerva—two of the cells perhaps of the triple temple in the Capitol—were struck with lightning, he caused the city to be illustrated, by the advice of the Haruspices. Of this solemn ceremonial the most picturesque feature was a procession of the priests of the various services; the Salii bearing the golden shields on their heads; the Vestals

that were expelled; the latter were retained, under the superintendence of a military guard, which Augustus had originally assigned for that purpose.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xii. ult. The temple of Claudius on the Cælian hill is supposed to have stood on the oblong platform, scarped on three sides, now occupied by the garden of the Passionists, and marked from a distance by a few slender cypresses. Ampère, *Hist. Rom. à Rome*, § 3.

guarding the sacred Palladium; the Galli, who lave in Almo the Mother of the Gods; with the noble Augurs and thrice-noble Flamens, the Septemvirs and Epulones, and every lesser priesthood girt with the simple cincture of the rustic Gabii.[1]

Favourable characteristics of Nero's early government.

We do not hear, indeed, that Nero took any personal part in the government; and whatever merit there was in his administration must in fairness be ascribed to the ministers rather than to their master. Nor can we give him the lesser praise of deliberately choosing his instruments well, and submitting his own inexperience to their riper judgment. Seneca and Burrhus had been given him by Agrippina. The rare occasions on which the prince appears on the public scene during this period were prepared for him by these advisers, and the kindly acts or sayings imputed to him were doubtless suggested by them. Thus much it seems just to detract from the fame of Nero's Quinquennium: nevertheless, setting aside all question of the real authorship of the acts belonging to it, the general course of government deserves apparently the praise it has received. The kindness of *kings upon their coronation day* has passed into a proverb. Little stress need be laid on the gracious promises of Nero at his accession, when words could cost him nothing, and might gain him much. His declarations in favour of justice and generosity were carried out consistently as long as there was no temptation to tyranny. The senate and magistrates were suffered to exercise their functions without control. If he ever interfered within their jurisdiction, it was in

[1] Lucan gives a spirited description of the procession, which no doubt he witnessed himself (*Phars.* i. 592.):

"Tum jubet et totam pavidis a civibus urbem
Ambiri, et festo purgantes mœnia lustro
Longa per extremos pomœria cingere fines
Pontifices, sacri quibus est permissa potestas," &c.

the direction of mercy, to overrule harsh sentences, or to mitigate them.[1] Never, however, was there a period more noted for the punishment of great criminals, especially of officers convicted of extortion in the provinces.[2] But all these cases were prosecuted in due course of law; no irregular procedure was allowed even to further the ends of justice, and, above all, the practice of delation was rigidly repressed. This, no doubt, was the circumstance which invested the early years of Nero with their brightest colours. There were no trials on charges of Majestas; and Nero showed himself, even to a late period, superior to petty mortifications from raillery and libel.[3] The empire had grown consciously stronger since the time of Tiberius, and could afford to disregard ridicule. Stories were current of the unwonted humanity evinced by this lord of the world, such as was seldom shown by the master of a score of bondmen. When required to set his name to a sentence of death, *Would to God,* he exclaimed, *that I had never learnt to write!*[4]

Liberality of Nero's financial measures.

The financial measures of this epoch display, as far as we can trace them, not only a liberality which might be confounded with mere thoughtless profusion, but some indications of a wise and intelligent policy. Nero inherited from Claudius the best of all legacies to a despot, a full treasury and a flourishing revenue. He could give without borrowing; he could endow without extorting.

[1] See the cases mentioned by Tacitus, *Ann.* xiii. 43, 52.; and again xiii. 27., xiv. 18. 22. 45.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 30. 33. 42., xiv. 18, 26, 46.

[3] Suet. *Ner.* 39.: "Mirum . . . . nihil cum patientius quam maledicta et convicia hominum tulisse."

[4] Suet. *Ner.* 10.: "Quam vellem nescire literas." The story is from Seneca, who takes occasion to remind his blushing pupil of it (*de Clem.* ii. 1.): "Ut de clementia scriberem, Nero Cæsar, una me vox tua maxime compulit: quam ego non sine admiratione et cum diceretur audisse memini, et deinde aliis narrasse," &c.

A donative to the soldiers, the necessary condition of their support, was followed by a largess to the people, prudent, no doubt, but not equally indispensable. Fresh draughts of veterans were established, with the surrender of public domains, in the colonies of Capua and Nuceria. Another measure, of which we should much wish to know the particulars, was the advance, apparently, of certain sums to the treasury, to maintain, as the historian oracularly phrases it, the solvency of the Roman people. We may conjecture that this liberality was meant to relieve the farmers of the tolls and tributes, or other responsible agents of finance. It amounted, we are told, only to forty millions of sesterces; and it is hard to conceive any great public relief being effected by a loan or even a gift of 320,000 pounds sterling.[1] In their excessive jealousy of taxation the citizens had complained that a rate of one twenty-fifth or four per cent. was exacted by the state on the purchase-money of slaves. The buyer of these articles of luxury was in most cases the Roman, the vendor was the subject or foreigner; and when the imperial government transferred the tax from the buyer to the vendor, the multitude were led to suppose that they had actually escaped it, not perceiving that the amount of the rate was still as before levied upon them in the advanced price of the commodity.[2] Nor was it the ruling caste only towards which this consideration was extended. When the proconsuls and other magistrates abroad were forbidden to exhibit gladiators and wild beasts in their provinces, the restriction must have been meant to relieve the subjects of the state from the burden of providing them.[3]

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 31.: "Sestertium quadringenties ærario illatum est ad retinendam populi fidem."

[2] Tacitus (*l. c.*) remarks this consequence: "Specie magis quam vi, quia cum venditor pendere juberetur, in partem pretii emptoribus accrescebat."

[3] Tac. *l. c.* "Ne quis magistratus aut procurator qui provinciam

His proposal to abolish the vectigalia. A. D. 58. A. U. 811.

This gleam of consideration for the interests of a class to whom it was so rarely extended by the Roman statesmen, seems to indicate a change of feeling in the conquerors towards the conquered, which we are prompt to remark, expecting important consequences to follow. But we are still doomed to be disappointed. Meagre and inconclusive are the notices we find regarding the views of the imperial administration. It is impossible to construct from them anything which may be called a policy. We note the glimmer of a great social principle beneath the folds of political history; but in a moment the field of vision is overclouded, and we dare not indulge the speculations which have risen in our minds lest it should appear that they are founded on a misapprehension of our own, or on a misstatement of our informant. After the financial measures just mentioned, Tacitus proceeds to speak of another, apparently of much greater importance. The circumstance refers to the fourth year of Nero's reign, and is thus stated by the historian, the obscurity or confusion of whose account it may be well to exhibit, to show by a single instance how little precision is to be looked for in the prince of pictorial narrators. So numerous, he says, were the complaints of *the people* against the extortions of the publicans, that Nero actually meditated surrendering all *duties* and conferring the noblest of all presents on *the human race.* But the senators, with much praise of his liberality, restrained his ardour, by proving that the empire would be dissolved if the imposts by which it was supported should be diminished: for it was clear that if the *duties* were abolished, a remission of *taxes* would be speedily demanded. They showed that many associations for farming the revenues had been established

obtineret, spectaculum gladiatorum aut ferarum, aut quod aliud ludicrum ederet."

by *consuls and tribunes of the plebs* at a period when the *Roman people* were most jealous of their liberties: . . . they allowed, however, that it was expedient to put some restrictions on the cupidity of the publicans.[1] The question here arises whether the duties, of which Nero would have made a present to the *human race*, were those which prevailed generally throughout the empire, or whether they refer only to such as were peculiar to the ruling caste of citizens. Undoubtedly the offer, at first sight, seems to be universal; and so it has been generally regarded by the critics, historians, and writers on Roman finance. Yet there are words in the passage which seem to me very clearly to limit its application to the Roman citizens only, the class for whom, according to ideas which had not yet lost their force, the subject races of the empire toiled, unpitied and unregarded.

Examination of what it really imports.

The question must be discussed at greater length. The abolition of the whole system of indirect taxation throughout the empire would indeed have been the conception of a madman. It could only have been effected in company with an immense increase of direct payments, such as the land-tax, poll-tax, and property-tax, at a time when the state had relinquished all claim to the absolute use and possession of its conquered territories. But no such increase, it would seem, was contemplated. Nor, again, is the establishment of such a system of free-trade, by the removal of all imposts on commercial transactions between land and land, consistent with the spirit of the time, and the cherished ideas of antiquity, which were far as yet from realizing an equality of rights among mankind. Doubtless

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 50.: "Crebris *populi* flagitationibus immodestiam publicanorum arguentis, dubitavit Nero an cuncta *vectigalia* omitti juberet, idque pulcherrimum donum *generi mortalium* daret . . . . Plerasque vectigalium societates a Consulibus et Tribunis plebis constitutas, acri etiam *populi Romani* tum libertate."

Seneca was in advance of his age; doubtless he would speak even more freely as a philosopher than he would act as a statesman; yet the rare expressions of political liberality which have been gleaned from his writings would be a very insufficient ground for ascribing to him any profound views on this subject. *Virtue,* he says in one place, *embraces all men together, freedmen, slaves, and kings. . . . We are born to a common inheritance. . . . Wisdom invites the human race to live together in amity.*[1] Such commonplaces as these constitute at best but a slender claim to the praise of practical liberalism. It seems therefore impossible to suppose that Nero really meant to remit the whole custom duties of the empire. I would limit the extent of his scheme to a surrender of duties payable on commodities and transactions in Italy, and the colonies of Roman citizens. Such a remission would have had a clear analogy to defend it. From the time of the conquest of Macedonia the land-tax had been remitted to the citizens, though the census or property-tax on moveables, which also bore the invidious name of *tribute,* continued to press upon them. But the popular tribune Metellus Nepos had abolished the indirect taxation of tolls and dues in Italy, and it was with great soreness that the citizen had seen this burden reimposed by Julius Cæsar, and maintained, as a state necessity, by the triumvirs and the emperors. We may easily believe that the young impulsive Nero

[1] Senec. *de Benef.* iii. 18.: "Virtus omnes admittit, libertinos, servos, reges." *Epist.* 95.: "Membra sumus magni corporis . . . . natura nos cognatos edidit." *Epist.* 90.: "Sapientia genus humanum ad concordiam vocat.' These and a few more passages, in which God is called our *common parent,* slaves and freemen are said to be *naturally equal,* &c., constitute, I think, the writer's whole claim to the character of a cosmopolite. They are once only faintly echoed by Lucan, *Phars.* i. 60.:

"Tum genus humanum positis sibi consulat armis,
Inque vicem gens omnis amet."

conceived it worthy of the successor of the tribunes, to abolish once more this detested impost upon the favoured caste; and this was probably as far as his liberality extended. The flourish about *a boon to the human race* was an indiscreet bravado either of the ignorant prince, or of the unreflecting historian. Nero's advisers, indeed, naturally pointed out that the burdens of which the citizens complained had been originally imposed, not by triumvirs and emperors, but by the consuls and tribunes of the free state. Rome in the height of her pride and independence had felt no humiliation in submitting to them. But were her claim to exemption from these dues conceded, she would have a pretence for demanding abolition of the tribute or census also, and for obtaining that complete immunity which was the dearest wish of her indolent selfishness.[1] Nero, whose generosity was a mere impulse, founded on no principle of policy or humanity, was no doubt easily persuaded to desist from his scheme; and perhaps we may trace in the genuine liberality of his advisers, who discouraged such an indulgence to a special class, the wider and wiser views of the sage who presided over them. The project resulted in a few sensible regulations of detail; for making the revenue laws better known that they might be better obeyed; for limiting the claims for arrears; for putting the publicani under stricter supervision; for abolishing a few trivial but vexatious imposts; for relieving the importer of grain from the pressure of certain bur-

[1] It will be seen that I regard the phrase of Tacitus, "donum generi humano," as an incorrect expression. We are not yet in a position to consider whether the times in which the historian himself wrote offered any excuse for this mistake. At a later period the exemption of Italy from the land-tax was annulled, and the whole empire placed on an equal footing in respect of fiscal burdens. Savigny thinks that this took place in the time of Diocletian (see *Vermischte Schrift.* i. 43.), from an obscure passage in Aurelius Victor (*Cæsar.* 30.), on the occasion of the permanent establishment of an imperial court and army in Italy.

dens; and with this view exempting the ships of the corn merchants from the common tax on property.[1]

The policy of Nero gives satisfaction to the senate.

The salutary regulations here recorded belong to the first three or four years of this principate; but the general improvement of the administration depended on principles which continued to operate through the first half, at least, and in many cases to the end of a reign of more than thirteen years. So long did Nero persist, under the guidance of trusty counsellors, in maintaining the dignity of the senatorial order, as the highest judicial and legislative tribunal. The position of Seneca and Burrhus in antagonism to Agrippina could only be maintained by upholding the authority of the senate; the activity of which is attested by the number of laws and decrees which at this period emanated from it. The youth and inexperience of Nero, overwhelmed as he was by the weight of affairs which the recent example of his laborious predecessor forbade him to reject, compelled him to rely on these practised advisers; and the more so as the odium which attached to the whole class of the imperial freedmen required him to waive their succour. The dispersion of the secret conclave gave immediate relief to the senate, which breathed more freely, and acted more boldly, when it felt that no private influence stood between it and the throne. It expressed the sense of its recovered liberty, partly by the loudest eulogies of the new reign, partly by renewed activity within the now extended sphere of its operations.[2]

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 51.

[2] Hoeck has collected from the Digest the names of certain Senatusconsulta; viz. Silanianum, Calvisianum, Memmianum, Trebellianum, and Neronianum, which may be referred to this period. They apply to the treatment of slaves, to adoption, to testamentary trusts, &c. See *Ræm. Gesch.* i. 3. p. 356. fol. Nero transferred to the senate a share of the appeals in civil cases, which recent princes (and perhaps Claudius more particularly, in his insatiable appetite for business) had grasped for themselves. At a later period he re-

On the occasion of a military success in Armenia, it not only saluted Nero as imperator, and decreed the customary supplications, arches, and statues; but established an annual commemoration of the days on which the victory was gained, the news brought home, and the decree made concerning it. *Were we to thank the Gods*, said C. Cassius, *according to their kindness, the whole year would not suffice us. Let it be at once divided into two portions, one for public affairs, the other for giving thanks for Nero.* Even the irony of a senator who bore the name of a tyrannicide, if irony it were, proved the freedom of speech now permitted to his order.[1]

No inquiry made into the irregularities of his private life.

The ancient usage of the republic still required the prince to take his seat on the tribunal; and there, assisted by his council, Nero, like Claudius before him, listened to appeals from the ordinary courts of justice, and gave final sentence from his own breast. Warned, however, by his predecessor's example, he limited the addresses of the rival pleaders, and checked vague declamation by requiring each point to be separately discussed before opening on another.[2] His judgments were issued always in writing, and after mature deliberation; and in the interval he expected his assessors to give him their opinions separately, from which he made up his own in private, and delivered

linquished the labour and responsibility altogether. Such, at least, seems the best way of reconciling the discrepancy between Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 28. and Suet. *Ner.* 17. See note of Baumgarten Crusius in loc. Suet.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 41.

[2] Suet. *Ner.* 15. Baumgarten Crusius explains him thus: "Er liess die Sache Punkt für Punkt untersuchen:" "productis testibus, literis, aliisque judicii instrumentis, idque per vices, utraque parte alternatim audita. Hic igitur transitus fuit ad nostrorum judiciorum (the German) morem ab antiquo, qui observatur in Britannia adhuc terrisque Galliæ subjectis." This, no doubt, is the improvement to which Seneca points in his sneer at the impatience of Claudius: "Una tantum parte audita, sæpe et neutra."

it as the common decision of the cabinet. It would seem, from this account of his public conduct, that he was strongly impressed with the conviction that he held power on sufferance only; and was not blinded by adulation to the precariousness of his position as the first citizen of an aristocratic republic. But as long as he executed his delegated functions for the common weal of his order, they, on their part, made no inquisition into the privacy of his domestic life. The curtains which the Roman drew across the vestibule of his mansion were a sacred screen, behind which none could enter unbidden. Within that vale the courteous statesman or the bland philosopher might play the tyrant to his slaves, to his children, and to his women. Their self-indulgence and debauchery in their grossest shapes sheltered themselves alike from the decrees of the censors, and the murmurs of public opinion. It was not till a later period, when the fall of Nero dissipated all lingering reserve, that the inner life of the palace was disclosed to the eyes of the citizens, and the process laid bare, step by step, by which he was corrupted into a monster of depravity. Already, beneath the show of care for the interests of the state, he was learning to regard his own safety, his own convenience, as paramount to every obligation, and trying what amount of horrors the world would bear for the sake of his gracious administration.

The "Quinquennium Neronis."

But Rome was tranquil; the citizens were content; the senate, affecting to speak the voice of the nation, pronounced Nero the best of its princes since Augustus. Affairs might seem to run more smoothly even from the absence of great principles to guide them. Nero differed from all his predecessors in the extent to which he suffered affairs to take their natural course. Julius Cæsar had deliberately overthrown old forms and prescriptions which he felt to be obsolete, confident of the

creative force of his own master-genius. Augustus strove to revive the past. Tiberius was content with shaping the present. Caius, awakened in his youthful inexperience to the real character of the station which his predecessors had disguised from themselves and the world, chose rashly to claim for it all the prerogatives which logically belonged to it. Claudius affected, in the narrow spirit of a pedant on the throne, to govern mankind by personal vigilance, as a master governs his household. Nero, at last, or his advisers for him, seems to have renounced all general views, to have abstained from interfering with the machinery of empire, and contented himself with protecting it from disturbance. The tradition of the felicity of these five auspicious years, to which the best of this prince's successors gave long afterwards the palm of virtuous administration, attests the consciousness of the Romans that they were ruled with a masterly inactivity.[1] Great honour is undoubtedly due to the men who actually governed for Nero, that they did so little to abuse their temporary ascendancy. There seems, however, less reason to extend our admiration to Nero himself, or to regard this happy result as the triumph of philosophy over youthful passions, and the fatal sense of irresponsibility. We must [rather admit that his reserve was caused by incapacity or indifference, by an engrossing taste for frivolities which belonged to his tender years, or by the dissipation to which his position too naturally enticed him.

[1] It was the well-known saying of the Emperor Trajan, fifty years later: "Procul differre cunctos principes Neronis quinquennio." Aurel. Victor, *Cæsar.* 5., *Epit.* 5.

CHAPTER LIII.

Nero's passion for Poppæa Sabina.—Intrigues against Agrippina.—Nero's machinations against her unsuccessful.—She is finally despatched by his orders.—Seneca and Burrhus implicated in the murder.—Institution of the Neronian games.—The Ludi Maximi.—Nero's insensibility to national feeling.—Moderation in regard to charges of libel and majesty.—Death of Burrhus.—Seneca seeks to withdraw from public life.—Rise and influence of Tigellinus.—Death of Plautus and Sulla.—Nero's extravagance and cruelty.—Repudiation, banishment, and death of Octavia.—Prosecution of wealthy freedmen, Doryphorus and Pallas.—Nero's progress in licentiousness.—He exhibits himself in the Circus.—His infamous debauchery.—Burning of Rome.—Persecution of the Christians.—Restoration of the city.—Nero's golden house.—Further exactions and confiscations.—Conspiracy of Piso.—Its detection and punishment.—Death of Lucan and Seneca.—Pretended discovery of the treasures of Dido.—Death of Poppæa.—Further proscriptions.—Storms and pestilence.—Reflections of Tacitus.—Death of Annæus Mela.—Prosecution and death of Soranus and Thrasea. (A.D. 58–66, A.U. 811–819.)

Uncertainty of the history of this period.

THE legislation of Nero's principate has been examined, and the character of his civil administration depicted, from the notices of historians and jurists. The materials are slender, and the delineation is necessarily unsteady and superficial. Such is the public history of the times. But we now turn to an intrigue of the palace, a story of domestic hate and private crime, and we find its whole course, and every detail, described to us with the clearest and strongest lines; while to the careful inquirer more darkness really hovers over this picture than the other. A thoughtful reader can hardly peruse a sentence of the *Annals* of Tacitus, his chief guide at this period, without feeling that

he is in unsafe hands. The matters of which his author now treats had for the most part no public bearing; transacted in secret, they could only have been revealed by treacherous, or at least by interested narrators; and it is with vexation, not unmixed with wonder, that we remark the complacency with which he recounts events of which he could have had no certain knowledge, of which false and coloured statements must necessarily have been rife, and can hardly have failed to imbue the representations of the writers from whom he almost indiscriminately drew. *Many persons*, says the Jewish historian Josephus, *have undertaken to write the history of Nero; of whom some have disregarded the truth on account of favours received from him, others from personal hostility have indulged in abominable falsehoods.* As a foreigner, Josephus was exempt from many of the prejudices of the Romans; he regarded these matters from a more distant and a clearer point of view. Undoubtedly, the particular details of intrigue and crime, on which we are about to enter, must be received with caution and distrust; nevertheless, Josephus himself believes in the poisoning of Britannicus, and the murders, now to be related, of Agrippina and Octavia; the name of Nero is branded with atrocities which can neither be denied nor extenuated.[1] The story must be told as it is delivered to us, and no man will care to mar its horrible interest by scrutinizing step by step the ground on which he is treading.

Rise of Poppæa Sabina.

Since her defeat by Seneca and Burrhus, at the outset of the new reign, the empress-mother seems to have refrained from provoking a further trial of strength; and, possibly, she regained by this prudent reserve a portion of the

[1] Joseph, *Antiq. Jud.* xx. 7. 3.

influence she had forfeited. When, after an interval of almost five years, the curtain again draws up on a scene of the interior of the palace, we find Nero still married, but not united, to Octavia, Agrippina watching their connexion with a jealousy which frustrates every attempt to draw him into another marriage, while Acte still retains her place as the reigning favourite. We find the young and gallant Otho still first of the prince's friends and associates, fascinating his master by his graces, and rising in public honours. Nero is now two and twenty instead of seventeen: in other respects we note little change in the personages or situations of the drama. But a new character now steps upon the stage, destined to work out a startling catastrophe. Poppæa Sabina, the wife of Otho, was the fairest woman of her time, and with the charms of beauty she combined the address of an accomplished intriguer.[1] Among the dissolute women of imperial Rome, she stands preeminent. Originally united to Rufius Crispinus, she had allowed herself to be seduced by Otho, and obtained a divorce in order to marry him. Introduced by this new connexion to the intimacy of Nero, she soon aimed at a higher elevation. But her husband was jealous and vigilant, and she herself knew how to allure the young emperor by alternate advances and retreats, till, in the violence of his passion, he put his friend out of the way, by dismissing him to the government of Lusitania.[2] Poppæa suffered

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 45. (under the year 811): "Huic mulieri cuncta alia fuere præter honestum animum." There are several busts in existence supposed to represent Poppæa; but their authenticity is very questionable. The features are of infantine grace and delicacy, not unsuited to the soft voluptuousness of the habits imputed to her. See Ampère, *Hist. de Rome à Rome*, § 3. But her images, we are told, were generally destroyed at the death of Nero.

[2] The story is somewhat differently told by our authorities, and even by Tacitus himself in his *Histories* and his *Annals*. In the

Otho to depart without a sigh. She profited by his absence to make herself more than ever indispensable to her paramour, and aimed, with little disguise, at releasing herself from her union, and supplanting Octavia by divorce or even by death.[1]

Detestation in which Agrippina was popularly held.

It seems, however, that this bold design could only be effected by the overthrow of Agrippina. If this woman had recovered a portion of her power over her son, she at least retained little of his affections. To control him by fear was no longer possible; an influence once broken could never be restored on the footing of ancient habit. There was hardly a crime of which she was not reputed guilty; there was no excess of which Rome believed her incapable. Murder and adultery were the common instruments of her ambition: in marrying Claudius she had engaged in an act which popular feeling regarded as incest. Indignant and disgusted at her crimes, her debaucheries, and the crimes and debaucheries of her favourites and creatures, hating her as the sister of Caius, hating her as the wife of Claudius, loathing her as the harlot of Narcissus and Pallas, execrating her at last, in the bitterness of their disappointment, as the vile daughter of their noble Germanicus, her countrymen were prepared to believe the rumour that she had tried, as a last device, to entangle her own son in a criminal intrigue with herself.[2] Some, indeed, whispered that Nero had been the first to solicit his mother; but the other story gained more

latter work he speaks, no doubt, from his latest and best information, which agrees with the distich in Suetonius (*Otho*, 3.):

"Cur Otho mentito sit, quæritis, exul honore?
Uxoris mœchus cœperat esse suæ."

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 46., A.D. 58, A.U. 811.

[2] Tac, *Ann.* xiv. 2. (A.U. 812): "Tradit Cluvius Agrippinam," &c. On the other hand: "Fabius Rusticus non Agrippinæ sed Neroni cupitum id memorat. . . . Sed quæ Cluvius eadem cæteri quoque auctores prodidere, et fama huc inclinat."

general credence; no one asked whether a woman of fifty could dream of such a conquest over the fairest charmers of the court, or betray her odious secret to those who watched around her. But so nearly was she successful, they went on to aver, that it was with difficulty her arts were frustrated by Seneca; who deterred Nero from the crime, by representing, from the lips of Acte, the shock it would cause to public feeling, and the dangers which might ensue.[1]

Poppæa intrigues against her.

However this may be, and whether or not Agrippina, the writer of a scandalous chronicle herself, has suffered from the lying tongues of enemies of her own, Poppæa was now engaged with her in open strife, and one or the other must perish in the contest. Poppæa had so far succeeded as to get her lover to contemplate marriage with her, while he still shrank from the preliminary steps. Of Octavia, indeed, neither one nor the other took account. It was Agrippina's anger, Agrippina's power, that Poppæa sought to overcome. She treated Nero as a child controlled by an unreasonable parent; she excited him to rebel against undue authority; made him ashamed of his subservience, and alarmed at the state of dependence in which she represented him as lying. He was no emperor, she said; he was not even a free man. Finally, she persuaded him

[1] The strange story told by Dion (lxi. 11.) seems equivalent to a confession that this scandal was not generally reputed worthy of belief: ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνο μὲν, εἴτ' ἀληθὲς ἐγένετο, εἴτε πρὸς τὸν τρόπον αὐτῶν ἐπλάσθη, οὐκ οἶδα· ἃ δὲ δὴ πρὸς πάντων ὁμολόγηται λέγω, ὅτι ἑταίραν τινὰ τῇ 'Αγριππίνῃ ὁμοίαν ὁ Νέρων δι' αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἐς τὰ μάλιστα ἠγάπησε, καὶ αὐτῇ τε ἐκείνῃ προσπαίζων, καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐνδεικνύμενος, ἔλεγε ὅτι καὶ τῇ μητρὶ ὁμιλοίη. Lucan, towards the end of his poem, speaks with true Roman indignation of the incest permitted to the Parthians, in which he may possibly have had regard to stories nearer home (viii. 406.):

> "Damnat apud gentes sceleris non sponte peracti
> Œdipodionias infelix fabula Thebas:
> Parthorum dominus quoties sic sanguine mixto
> Nascitur Arsacides! cui fas implere parentem
> Quid rear esse nefas!"

that his mother was conspiring against him: the charges triumphantly rebutted four years before, were repeated with more success: for Nero began now to feel an interest in believing them, and he had learnt, in the exercise of his power, that it was possible to condemn the suspected without bringing them face to face with their accusers.[1]

Nero contemplates the murder of his mother.

No intrigue of the palace could be supposed complete at this period unless Seneca was its instigator or accomplice; and accordingly the sage is himself accused of counselling the dreadful crime which has now to be related. The first attempt on Agrippina's life, as recounted by Tacitus, is one of the darkest scenes of his long tragedy. That it is true in the main, we have at least no reason to question; but Suetonius and Dion have each added details, not wholly consistent with one another, which may serve to remind us that the particulars of such deeds could seldom be accurately known, and how much scope there was for invention and embellishment in the obscurity of contemporary history. Nero, it seems, full of fear or disgust, long avoided all private intercourse with his mother, and recommended her to withdraw to a suburban residence. But this was not enough to reassure him. There was no intention of bringing her to trial: open violence against her could not be ventured: against poison she was guarded by her own caution, and the fidelity of her attendants: the statement that she had fortified herself by antidotes, is one of the vulgar fictions of antiquity, which modern science scarce deigns to refute, yet it is not impossible that she allowed such a rumour to be spread as a measure of precaution. Again, after the mysterious death of

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 1. Such was the dread in which Nero at this time held his mother, that he entertained thoughts (so at least we are assured) of quitting Rome, divesting himself of power, and returning to a private station at Rhodes. Suet. *Ner.* 34.

Britannicus, a second catastrophe of the kind in the imperial family would have excited terrible suspicions. Among the prince's intimates was one Anicetus, a freedman of the court, but advanced to the command of the fleet at Misenum, who had formerly been his preceptor, and had personal grounds of hostility to Agrippina. This man explained to his eager patron the mechanism by which a vessel might be constructed to fall in pieces at a given signal in the water. In this Agrippina should be invited to embark; the disruption of the treacherous planks might be imputed to the winds and waves, and then her pious son might erect a temple to his victim, and satisfy the unconscious world of his dutiful affection.[1]

Failure of an attempt to destroy her at sea.

Such a vessel was accordingly prepared, fitted up sumptuously, and assigned for the conveyance of Agrippina from Bauli, where she would land from Antium, to Baiæ, whither she was invited by Nero, at the celebration of the five days' festival of Minerva in the month of March. At this period, the beginning of spring, the fashionable season of the baths began; and Nero pretended to open it with an act of reconciliation with the parent from whom he had been too long estranged. The empress left her own vessel at Bauli, as anticipated, and was received on the beach by Nero; but apprised, as was believed, of some intended treachery, she declined to mount the fatal bark, and insisted on completing the transit to Baiæ in a litter. But there

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 3. Suetonius says that the first design was to crush Agrippina under the falling roof of a chamber prepared on shore for the purpose; but that of this Agrippina was forewarned. *Ner.* 34. Dion assures us that Poppæa and Seneca, not Nero, first took the idea of the treacherous ship from some machinery of the kind in the theatre, and applied it to the projected destruction of Agrippina. But this strange mechanism occurs again in Dion's history (lxxvi. 1.), under the reign of Severus. Reimar refers to a coin of that emperor on which it is represented. See Vaillant, *Num. Imp.* ii. 230.

every apprehension was removed by the caresses lavished upon her. The banquet was protracted to a late hour, and when at last Nero took leave of her with the blandest demonstrations of affection, she no longer hesitated to enter the vessel which had been sent to Baiæ to receive her. The weather was fair, the sky brilliant with stars, the gay company of the baths, turning night into day, lingered on the beach as she embarked. There was nothing strange or unusual in such a nocturnal excursion. But no sooner had the rowers put off from shore than the canopy beneath which Agrippina reclined with her ladies gave way under the weight of lead with which it had been loaded, and crushed one of her attendants. At the same instant the bolts were suddenly withdrawn. In the confusion, however, the mechanism failed to act; the sailors tried, by rushing to one side of the vessel, to overturn or sink it, having means at hand to make their own escape. This too was unsuccessful, but Agrippina and her companions were immersed in the water, and one of the women, named Acerronia, hoping to save herself by exclaiming that she was the empress, was beaten with oars and drowned. Agrippina, with more presence of mind, kept silence, and swam, or floated on fragments of the wreck, till picked up by boats from the shore; but she too was struck once on the shoulder. Carried to a villa of her own on the banks of the Lucrine lake, and now fully conscious of the treachery from which she had so narrowly escaped, she felt in her retreat that the only chance of safety was to pretend entire ignorance of it. Without delay she despatched her freedman Agerinus to Nero, to announce her happy escape from a lamentable accident, to entreat him to calm his own impatience, and defer visiting her till she had tended her wounds, and rested from her fatigues.

Of the failure, Nero was already made aware. He

had watched the vessel quit the shore of Baiæ; perhaps in the moonlight he had witnessed the catastrophe; at all events, long before the arrival of Agerinus he was apprised that Agrippina had escaped, wounded, but with life; and he knew too well that she was no longer deceived by his caresses. He believed, in his terror, that she was prepared to arm her slaves, to call upon the soldiers, to appeal to the senate and people against him. Burrhus and Seneca were at hand. Tacitus leaves it uncertain whether, as some believed, they were actually concerned in the plot. His silence may be taken, perhaps, as so far favourable to them.

Further machinations against Agrippina.

When, however, they came into the prince's presence, and heard his confession of guilt and earnest demand for advice, there was first a long silence; they may have despaired of dissuading; possibly they thought that there now was no alternative; either the son or the mother must perish. At last Seneca turned to Burrhus and asked whether the soldiers should be directed to kill her. Burrhus replied that the soldiers could not be trusted against a daughter of Germanicus: *Let the admiral*, he said, *be required to fulfil his promise.* . . . . *Be mine the deed*, replied Anicetus; whereupon Nero exclaimed with transport that this was the first day of his imperium; that he owed the boon to a freedman. When Agerinus presently appeared, Anicetus let a dagger be dropped at his feet, then seized him as an assassin, and loaded him with chains; intending, after the murder of Agrippina, to declare that she had attempted to assassinate the emperor, and failing in her design, had put an end to her own existence.

Complicity of Seneca and Burrhus.

The Baian palace and the Lucrine villa lay perhaps not many furlongs apart, and these incidents, crowded within a narrow space, had all occurred in the course of a few

Murder of Agrippina effected.

hours. As soon as Agrippina's disaster was known to the residents of the coast, they rushed to the beach, thronged the moles and terraces and leapt into the boats beneath them, to ascertain what had befallen her. The shore gleamed with innumerable torches, and resounded with cries, and vows, and agitated murmurs. When it was known that she had escaped, the multitude hurried to her place of refuge in a tumult of joy. Arrived at the doors, they found them beset by the armed band of Anicetus. Placing a guard at every entrance, the freedman had made his way into the villa, and required the slaves to lead him into their mistress's presence. There lay the matron on a couch, with a single attendant, by the light of a single lamp, waiting anxiously for her messenger's return. Reassured for a moment by the enthusiasm of the populace, she sickened over the long delay; and when the cries of the multitude sank into silence, too surely presaged the end which was to follow. The slave herself slipped at last out of the room, and as she exclaimed, *Do you too desert me?* she beheld Anicetus and his soldiers enter. She had scarce time to bid them return with a favourable account of her health to their master, when one of them struck her on the head with a stick, and the rest rushed upon her, and despatched her with many wounds, she exclaiming only, as she lay prostrate before them, *Strike the womb which bore a monster!*[1]

Brutal behaviour of Nero.

In this account, says Tacitus, all writers in the main agree. As to what is reported to have followed there was no such general agreement: we may believe it if we will. Perhaps he would wish us to believe, what he dares not himself assert, that Nero came in person to examine the corpse of the mangled old woman, and coolly praised its beauty to his attendants.[2] The

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 3—8.

[2] So also Dion, lxi. 14.: οὐκ ᾔδειν ὅτι οὕτω καλὴν μητέρα εἶχον.

remains were burnt the same night without ceremony; nor were they even entombed till some of Agrippina's domestics placed the ashes in a decent sepulchre beside the road to Misenum. One of her freedmen, Mnester, slew himself upon it; a token of fidelity which deserves at least to be recorded to her credit. Through a long career of ambition and wickedness she had never blinded herself to the fate which too surely awaited such a position and such schemes as hers. When she consulted the Chaldeans about her son's fortunes, they had warned her that he was destined to reign himself and then to slay her. *Let him kill me*, she had answered, *let him but reign.*[1]

Nero attempts to justify himself to the senate.

Then began, if we may believe some writers, the torments of mind which from thenceforth never ceased to gnaw the heart-strings of the matricide: the Furies shook their torches in his face; Agrippina's spectre flitted before him; the trumpet, heard at her midnight obsequies, still blared with ghostly music from the hill of Misenum.[2] However they might falter in their hopes or fears about the future, the ancient moralists clung fondly to the conviction that successful crime meets a sure punishment in this world.[3] We shall read how, many years later, Nero shunned the sight of Athens, as the city of the vengeful Eumenides, and shrank, in conscious guilt, from initiation in the Mysteries; yet, I fear, too much reliance must not be placed on these popular imaginations, for we are informed that

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 9.: "Occidat dum imperet."

[2] Suet. *Ner.* 34.: "Sæpe confessus exagitari se materna specie, verberibusque Furiarum ac tædis ardentibus." Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 10.; Dion, *l. c.*; Stat. *Sylv.* ii. 7. 118.:

"Pallidumque visa
Matris lampade respicis Neronem."

[3] Juvenal, xiii. 2.

"Prima est hæc ultio, quod se
Judice nemo nocens absolvitur."

he ventured himself to enact the part of Orestes; nor would Lucan have alluded to the fate of Clytæmnestra, had the murder of Agrippina been known to have left a sting in his patron's breast.[1] We are assured, however, and so far no doubt truly, that the first impulse of the self-accuser was to fly from the scenes which could not *change their faces like the courtiers to flatter him*, and retire to Naples, from whence he despatched a letter to the senate, composed, as usual, by Seneca, explaining the deed he had perpetrated. This missive asserted that his mother had conspired against his life; that her creature had been found with a weapon in the audience chamber; that, in confusion at the discovery, she had perished by her own hand. *I am scarcely yet assured of my safety*, exclaimed the monster: *It is no satisfaction to me*, he added, *to have escaped.*[2] The disaster in the bay he represented as an accidental shipwreck. He declared, however, that the death of this imperious woman might be accepted, at all events, as a public benefit; and he enumerated her acts of arrogance and ambition, ascribing to her fatal influence many of the worst excesses of Claudius. The explanation bordered too closely on a justification: it was taken as a murderer's confession of guilt, veiled by the ingenuity of a hired advocate. But to put the best face on their master's enormities was recognised as the duty both of the minister and the courtiers. While the senators heaped flatteries and

[1] Lucan, vii. 777.:

"Haud alias, nondum Scythica purgatus in ara,
Eumenidum vidit vultus Pelopeus Orestes."

Comp. Suet. *Ner.* 21.; Dion, lxiii. 22. According to Feuerbach, (*der Vatican. Apollo*), the Apollo Belvedere, which may have stood in Nero's villa at Antium, is not the Dragon-slayer, but the Averter of the Furies. Undoubtedly the posture is not that of an archer.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 11. Quintilian quotes from the letter these words: "Salvum nec esse adhuc nec credo nec gaudeo." *Inst. Orat.* viii. 5. 18.

felicitations upon him, they contrived to sell their suffrages for some acts of favour. Some exiles were recalled, particularly noble women, who were said to have suffered through the influence of Agrippina; the ashes of Lollia Paulina were restored to her native country, and a tomb permitted to be raised over them.

Nevertheless, the crime of which the wretched youth was conscious, seemed so far to transcend the worst deeds of the Roman princes, that Nero still apprehended, when reflection returned, a burst of indignation and even violence. The demeanour of his facile nobles reassured him beyond all expectation.

His triumphal entry into Rome.

Still he hesitated to show himself. His advisers urged him, as his best security, to affect the confidence of innocence. Still trembling, still blushing, he entered Rome in the face of day. Seneca, Burrhus, even the hardy Anicetus, might be amazed at his glowing reception. The senators came forth in their festal robes to meet him: their wives and children were arranged in long rows on either side of the way; the streets were thronged with seats raised against the houses, to accommodate the multitude of spectators as at a triumphal procession. And a triumph indeed it was: Nero had conquered Rome, and now led its people at his chariot-wheels to the Capitol. There he offered thanksgivings to the Gods, and descended again only to fling himself, in insolent security, into every form of monstrous dissipation, from which the last remains of reverence for a mother had hitherto served to withhold him.[1]

So secure, indeed, was the monster of his subjects' servile devotion, that he could now venture to despise the grim raillery with which the populace assailed him; for it was more in jest than indignation that

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 13.

they hung the sack, the instrument of death for parricide, about his statues, placarded the walls with the triad of matricides, *Nero, Orestes, Alcmæon, the three men that slew their mothers*, and teased him by pretending to denounce the perpetrators of these offensive ribaldries.[1] A discreet neglect soon caused this petty annoyance to cease. The current of men's excited imaginations was speedily diverted by the celebration of magnificent games, and the reflections of the jeering populace were turned from their ruler's cruelty to the indecency with which he descended himself upon the stage, and contended in feats of skill with the singers and musicians. Already at an earlier period, in his passion for charioteering, he had erected a circus in his own gardens on the Vatican, and there he had held the whip and reins, in the presence of applauding spectators admitted by invitation to his private entertainments. His tutors, it was said, had conceded him this indulgence to keep him from the more heinous impropriety of singing and playing; for he threatened to come forth like Apollo, a Roman, as he remarked, no less than a Grecian divinity, and claim as an honour for himself the admiration which was allowed to be honourable to the Deity. But he would be now no longer thus restricted. He resolved to exhibit himself as an actor; and still shrinking from the reputed enormity of appearing before promiscuous multitudes on the public stage, he devised a new festival, which he called the Juvenalia, to be held within the precincts of the palace. The prince himself was the hero of this solemnity. Arrived at the age of manhood, his beard was clipped, and the first tender down of his cheek

Nero gratifies the populace with shows.

Institution of the Juvenalia.

[1] Dion, lxi. 16.: Νέρων, Ὀρέστης, Ἀλκμαίων, μητροκτόνοι. Comp. Suet. *Ner.* 3.:

"Quis negat Æneæ magna de stirpe Neronem?
Sustulit hic matrem, sustulit ille patrem."

and chin enclosed in a golden casket, and dedicated to Jupiter in the Capitol.[1] This ceremony was followed by music and acting; men of all ranks and in great numbers were admitted as spectators; illustrious Romans were bribed to exhibit themselves as dancers and singers; grave senators and stately matrons capered in the wanton measures of mercenary buffoons and posture-makers. The degradation to which Nero thus constrained his noblest subjects seems, in the view of the philosophic Tacitus, to deepen the shades which hung over the fame of the matricide. The historian proceeds to describe, as an enhancement of his excesses, the establishment of what we should call a public garden round the basin of Augustus beyond the Tiber, where drinks and viands were distributed to the populace, and all comers, gentle and simple, received a *ticket for refreshments*, which good men exchanged for these vile commodities because they were compelled, the profligate from depraved inclination. Henceforth vice, he says, walked abroad more heinous and more shameless than ever. These promiscuous assemblages of men and women of all ranks together, corrupted the manners of the age more than any cause that could be named.[2]

[1] Dion, lxi. 19. There may be some question about the exact period of the institution of the Juvenalia. Tacitus mentions it under the year 812, but he does not expressly state that it was then instituted, for which, however, we have Dion's authority. The ceremony of first cropping the beard was more properly performed in the twentieth year (Suet. *Calig.* 10.); and if Nero was born, as I suppose, in October, 790, this would bring the date to 810 or 811. Suetonius and Dion tell a story, which I reject without hesitation as worthless, that Nero caused his aunt Domitia to be poisoned with a pretended medicine, from mere caprice, because, being sick, she had said she could now die without regret, having lived to see her darling's beard clipped. Hitherto at least Nero's enormities were not without a motive.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 15.: "Nec ulla moribus corruptis olim plus libidinum circumdedit quam illa colluvies."

Nero descends upon the stage.

Last of all, to crown the universal degeneracy, when his people had been sufficiently corrupted, Nero descended himself upon the stage, with the lyre in his hand, which he was seen to tune with nervous solicitude before commencing his performance. His voice was husky, his breath was short, and all the appliances of his art were unavailing to correct their defects.[1] But of this he was much too vain to be conscious. Nevertheless, to silence envious detractors, a troop of soldiers was kept always in attendance, and at their head stood Burrhus himself, disguising the sob of shame with ejaculations of applause. A band of young nobles, entitled Augustani, was enrolled to applaud the performance, to praise the divine beauty of the prince, and the divine excellence of his singing.[2] Doubtless the verses already quoted from Seneca were frequently in their mouths. Nero himself was a versemaker also. His claims to poetical merit were, as might be expected, meagre, and he so far distrusted himself in this art, that he entertained many rhymers about him, whose business it was to catch each pretty turn of phrase or thought that fell from him, and weave it into verse as best they might. *You may trace*, says Tacitus gravely, *in the poems of Nero the manner of their origin: for they flow not, as it were, with a current and inspiration of their own: they have no unity of style or meaning.*[3] In private Nero, as a philosopher's pupil, affected some interest in philosophical discussions, the common pastime of educated men in his time; and he suffered himself

[1] Dion, lxi. 20.: *Φώνημα βραχὺ καὶ μέλαν.* Lucian, *Neron.* 7.: *Τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ὀλίγον καὶ οὐκ ἀποχρῶν που δή.*

[2] Nero, it seems, had been charmed at Naples by the performance of professional *claquurs* from Alexandria, and made them his model. Suet. *Ner.* 20.

[3] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 16.: "Non impetu et instinctu, nec uno ore fluens." Suetonius (*Ner.* 52.) holds that he did compose his verses himself, and appeals to the manuscripts he had seen of them.

to be attended, after the fashion of the day, by the professed sages of Greece and Rome. It is said however that he had no real sympathy with their pursuits; he enjoyed a boyish gratification in setting them to wrangle together. Agrippina, indeed, is accused of having dissuaded him from the study, as unfit for a king of men.[1] For painting and sculpture, as Grecian arts, he may have acquired the taste of a virtuoso, and the charms of Grecian architecture incited him to magnificence in building.[2] But his true delight was in the shows of the theatre and the circus. In 813 he instituted games called after himself Neronia, to be conducted in the Greek fashion, and to recur periodically like the Olympian.[3] They embraced musical and gymnastic contests, as well as chariot-racing. For games of athletic skill he erected a gymnasium, this designation, as well as the contests themselves, being altogether new to the Romans. It is curious to read in Tacitus how the old-fashioned citizens, still a numerous and respectable body, murmured at the introduction of these foreign customs, which they connected with the reputed profligacy of Grecian morals, and how the rising generation defended them.[4] No page of our author reads more like a declamation of our own day. Nero caused himself to be inscribed

Institution of the Neronia.

[1] Suet. *Ner.* 52.

[2] The statues of the Apollo Belvedere, whether it be an original work of Grecian art, or a Roman copy (it seems not yet to be decided whether the material be the marble of Paros or of Carrara), and the Fighting Gladiator, were found in the ruins of Nero's palace at Antium. Of Nero's taste for building I shall speak hereafter. On the subject of the former work, see above, p. 325, note.

[3] Dion, lxi. 21.; Suet. *Ner.*: "Instituit quinquennale certamen primus omnium Romæ." According to Eckhel (*Doctr. Numm.* vi. 264.) these games continued to be repeated as late as the time of Constantine.

[4] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 21, 22. The contempt of the Romans for the gymnic entertainments of Greece is marked by Lucan, vii. 270.:

"Graiis delecta juventus
Gymnasiis aderit, studioque *ignava* palæstræ."

on the list of Citharœdi, and obtained the prize as the best of lyrists without an antagonist; for all the rest were declared by the judges unworthy even to compete with him. No reward was given for eloquence; but Nero again was pronounced to be the conqueror. The first public display of Lucan's poetical genius was made on this occasion; when he came forward to sing the praises of the prince who had made him his companion and assistant.[1] On the whole the first celebration of the Neronia was dignified and imposing; for the low buffoonery of the histrions, the favourites of the baser sort, was excluded from this Hellenic festival. It was remarked that from this time the Greek fashions, long denizened in Naples and the cities of Campania, obtained more and more favour with the Roman voluptuaries; the loose Greek robes in which the spectators were enjoined to array themselves, to favour the illusion of the spectacle, were retained in common use, and displaced, in spite of the sneer of Augustus, the toga of the world's masters.[2]

Increasing extravagance of the shows. The Ludi Maximi.

Our authorities, especially Suetonius and Dion, abound in details of the grandeur and extravagance of the shows with which Nero astonished his people, more particularly on the occasion of celebrating the Ludi Maximi, as he styled them, for the eternity of the Roman Empire. The most remarkable of these exhibitions was perhaps that of an elephant which descended from the cornice of the amphitheatre to the arena upon the tight rope—it does not appear how it first reached that elevation—with a Roman knight on its back. The distribution of precious objects—gold,

[1] Suetonius, *vit. Lucan.*

[2] Tac. *l. c.* The chlamys, a loose and short cloak, and crepis, a kind of sandal, were distinctive articles of Grecian costume, already much in use among the Roman sojourners at the Greek cities of Italy. See note of Lipsius on Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 21.

jewels, tissues, pictures, animals, and finally ships, houses, and estates—exceeded the wanton liberality of Caius. Nero followed the Roman tradition in constructing an amphitheatre for the display of his own elegant spectacles[1]; but he amazed and mortified them by excluding, in the spirit of Greek humanity, the combats of gladiators, and by refusing to sacrifice the life even of condemned criminals. Yet his scruples were those of the man of art, rather than the man of feeling. His Roman entertainments were served after the bloodier fashion of his own countrymen. In the course of his reign he is said to have produced not less than five hundred senators and six hundred knights arrayed for combat, though evidently their contests were not meant to be mortal. While the populace exulted in the descent of their magnates into the arena, Nero himself was better pleased when he prevailed on them to compete on the stage in music, and reduced what at other times had been an occasional sally of vanity to a regular practice. Foreign spectators were more affected than either the prince or his people, at beholding beneath their feet a Paulus, a Mummius, a Scipio, and a Marcellus, whose fathers' trophies were still conspicuous in the streets, whose fathers' halls and temples were the proudest monuments of the city.[2] Nero was the first of the emperors who seems, with some emotions of sensibility, to have been wholly devoid of national prejudices. Coarse and unamiable as the national feeling of the Romans was, the world

[1] The theatres adapted to scenic representations, in which the Greeks were content to exhibit such spectacles, were incapable, of course, of receiving the crowds of the great metropolis; but Nero, like many great builders before him, was content with a temporary edifice of wood.

[2] Suet. *Ner.* 12.; Dion, lxi. 17.: Καὶ ἐδακτυλοδείκτουν γε αὐτοὺς ἀλλήλοις, καὶ ἐπέλεγον, Μακεδόνες μὲν, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ τοῦ Παύλου ἔκγουνος· Ἕλληνες δὲ, οὗτος τοῦ Μομμίου· Σικελιῶται, ἴδετε τὸν Κλαύδιον· Ἠπειρῶται, ἴδετε τὸν Ἄππιον· Ἀσιανοὶ, τὸν Λούκιον· Ἴβηρες, τὸν Πούπλιον· Καρχηδόνιοι, Ἀφρικανόν· Ῥωμαῖοι δὲ πάντας.

had no better security against wanton and unmitigated tyranny.

We have now reached a period when the chief of the Roman state, the representative of its most illustrious families, is found altogether insensible to the principles which had carried her in triumph through every combination of foreign and domestic peril. The announcement of such a fact may induce us to pause in our narrative, and estimate, as we best may, the circumstances of the times which made such a phenomenon possible. Was the gay and thoughtless, but instructed and accomplished, prince before us the impersonation of the general feeling, or an exception to it? He was partly both. His want of sympathy with antiquity is to be ascribed partly to his education, which was exceptional, partly also to his position, in which he represented the lowest class of citizens, and reflected their temper and instincts. The teaching of Seneca, which drew all its interest from the Greek philosophy, was alien from the old Roman sentiments. His doctrines were essentially cosmopolite. He sought to refer questions of honour and justice to general and eternal principles, rather than solve them by the test of precedents and political traditions. The educated men of the later Republic, as well as of the early Empire, had opened their arms wide to embrace these foreign speculations; and whether they had resigned themselves to Epicurism, as was the fashion under Julius and Augustus, or had cultivated Stoicism, which was now more generally in vogue, they equally abandoned the ground of their unpolished fathers, which asserted the preeminence of patriotism above all the virtues, the subordination of every claim of right and duty to national interest and honour. But men cannot rule the world in the same spirit in which they conquer it. Humanity in its widest sense, as

Nero's insensibility to national feeling.

The result of his education in the principles of the Stoic philosophy.

sympathy with man, follows, by the condition of our nature, on the sense of ease and security. We shall presently see, indeed, the Roman Stoics suddenly awaking from this dream of philanthropy, and flinging themselves again, with passionate disappointment, upon the narrower interests which constituted the strength of their fathers; trying indeed, but feebly and with no consistency, to connect the duties of the Roman with the universal spirit of rectitude and holiness. But as yet, Stoicism, in the ranks of Roman society, was merely a speculative creed; and the habit now prevalent there, of speculating on the unity of mankind, the equality of races, the universality of justice, the subjection of prince and people, of masters and slaves, of conqueror and conquered, to one rule of Right, tended undoubtedly to sap the exclusive and selfish spirit of Roman antiquity.

2nd. Of his position at the head of the Roman democracy.

It was by his position, however, at the head of the dissolute democracy of Rome, that Nero was taught more especially to divest himself of the ideas and motives which seemed to become the offspring of the Domitii and the Julii. The eminence, indeed, to which he was born might itself preclude him from ever imbibing them. The men by whom his infancy had been surrounded were slaves and freedmen, chiefly of Greek extraction, men whose lessons of life and manners were pointed doubtless with many a gibe at the decrepitude of Latium and Sabellia, with proud laudation of the genius of Hellenic culture, which had survived so many conquests and captivities, and laid its invisible yoke on the necks of the world's masters. The society of the palace displayed, in striking colours, the intellectual superiority of the Greeks; and Nero was led, by all his early tuition, to regard intellectual polish as the true end of civilization. But the emperor, moreover, was the representative of the Roman populace; of that hybrid

multitude of the circus and the baths, which owed no fealty to the traditions of the forum and the camp. These were the natural supporters of his tribunitian power, while the nobles, the true blood of Rome, might be regarded as his hereditary enemies. Even the names of his predecessors, Tiberius and Caius, might remind him of the tribunes of two centuries before, the champions of the plebs against the optimates. We may almost imagine, that in this prevalence of personal over family appellations, there lingered yet a reminiscence of the popularity of the Gracchi [1]

Nero's temperate proceedings in cases of Majesty and libel.

It would appear, indeed, that while the nobles had no cause of quarrel against their prince, but for the offence he may have given to antique prejudices, they allowed themselves to reflect on his character and administration in terms that could not fail to make a breach between them. Scandalous as the vices and the amusements of Nero had now become, monstrous as were the crimes he had perpetrated within the sphere of his own family, his government was still conducted on wholesome principles, the co-ordinate powers of the state flourished under his tolerant protection, the magistrates were held in honour, the senate bore something more than the mere semblance of authority. The state was prosperous, the laws were respected, public criminals were punished, virtue and moderation were recognised as claims to reward. Under such circumstances, the canker of internal corruption, the absence of high principles, might be concealed from the eyes of ordinary observers; and it may be doubted whether all the philosophy of

[1] The indignant allusion of Lucan to the Drusi and Gracchi, and to the supposed exultation of their shades at the success of the Cæsarean usurpation, is not uninstructive (*Phars.* vi. in fin.):

"Vidi ego lætantes, popularia nomina, Drusos;
Legibus immodicos, ausosque ingentia Gracchos."

Rome could furnish one man wise enough to look beneath the surface, and detect the symptoms of national decay which really lurked there. The instincts of Christianity alone could indicate the disease, at the same time that they afforded the remedy. We must allow, then, that justice as well as prudence should have repressed the selfish jealousy of the nobles; and taught them at least to tolerate the ruler who deserved well of the republic. But it would seem that they had no such self-control. In the year 815, the turning-point, as it is commonly regarded, of Nero's public administration, a prætor named Antistius, who already, as tribune of the plebs, had shown little disposition to confine himself within the limits of his functions, thought fit to compose verses against the emperor, and to recite them in a company of knights and senators. The law of Majesty, under which such indecent raillery would have met with speedy punishment, had been set aside: Nero piqued himself on his generous discouragement of the informers. But the flatterers of power were ever prompt to seize an opportunity for courting it. It was easy to represent that the safety of the prince required protection to his dignity. A few years only of exemption from the shame and peril of delation had sufficed to blunt the sense of its enormities; and the demand now made by the courtly Capito for reviving of charges of Majesty, seems to have been hailed by all with blind precipitation. The senate assented without serious opposition from any of its members. But Capito required, further, that the action of the law should be retrospective. The ribaldry of Antistius, he protested, was not only shocking, but dangerous. The safety of the state, not of the emperor only, required an example to be made. The stretch of legal principle for his punishment was well deserved; and it was for once only. Many acquiesced in these violent

proceedings, so at least they pretended, to give the prince an opportunity of gracefully absolving his maligner by the exercise of the tribunitian veto. A consul designate, inspired by this refined notion of flattery, proposed that the culprit should be stripped of his prætorship and scourged to death, after the ancient manner. The senators ratified the outrageous sentence with headlong ardour; but Pætus Thrasea alone, one of the few honest men among them, refused to concur in it, and while he tempered his vote with much praise of the emperor, and invectives against his defamer, invoked the milder punishment of exile with confiscation. This temperate counsel had a great effect on the impulsive assembly, ever prone, as we have seen, to the most sudden conversions, and devoid, it would seem, of those convictions and principles, the possession of which is among the most essential qualities of a deliberative body. It was determined to proceed no further without first ascertaining the emperor's real wishes; and this precipitate flattery ended in placing him in the disagreeable position of deciding as a judge on a question of his own personal dignity. Nero hastened to refer the affair again to the senate, not omitting, however, to claim some credit for allowing it to absolve the criminal. After some farther discussion, Thrasea's firmness prevailed; and the senators generally acquiesced in his vote for the minor punishment.[1] Patient as the emperor had shown himself in the case of a libel against his own person, he bore, as might be expected, with equal composure, the publication of scandalous writings against the senate. When a certain Fabricius Veiento was accused, of putting forth offensive libels against the fathers and the pontiffs, Nero, to whom the cognisance of the charge was referred by appeal, again declined to in-

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 48. For the turbulent character of this man, called elsewhere (*Ann.* xiii. 53.; xvi. 10.) L. Vetus, see xiii. 28.

terfere. It was not till a fresh indictment was presented against the culprit, and he was declared to have trenched on the imperial prerogatives, and even to have sold magistracies and other appointments, that the chief of the state could be induced to summon him before his tribunal. Veiento was banished from Italy; his books, the original subject of complaint, were ordered to be burnt, and it was declared criminal to read or possess them. As long as this interdict lay upon them, they were sought for with ardour; but when it was shortly afterwards removed, they soon ceased to attract curiosity.[1]

Death of Burrhus ascribed to poison.

To those who, with the bitter experience of past years, foresaw that the first step, however hesitating, in the direction of tyranny, must rapidly lead to a revival of its pristine terrors, even these indications of imperial jealousy might serve as a warning. But the young Cæsar's progress in dissipation and expense gave nearer cause for apprehension. The wasteful extravagance of his first eight years could not have been maintained with pure hands, had he not found in the coffers of his predecessor the accumulated treasures of a reign of carefulness and moderation. Though no friendly voice has deigned to signalize the economy of Claudius, this fact seems alone sufficient to establish it, and to add another to the various circumstances which impugn the common notion of his imbecility, and the unchecked rapacity of his ministers. But the descent from dissipation to extravagance, from extravagance to want, from want to violence and tyranny, was inevitable. It could only be a question of time. The profusion of the prince would surely grow with indulgence; his treasury must stand always empty, and unlimited power would not long be baulked of the means of replenishing it.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 50.: "Conquisitos lectitatosque, donec cum periculo parabantur, mox licentia habendi oblivionem attulit."

Such was the gloomy prospect before the nobles, when, the first to apprehend as the first to feel the tyranny of their autocrat, they saw with dismay the death of Burrhus and the removal therewith of the strongest bulwark against the encroachments of unthrifty despotism. Rumours of poison were whispered among them, and symptoms were reported which gave colour to the suspicion. Nero, it was related, had repeatedly come to the sick man's bedside, to inquire after his health; but he could extort from him no thanks for this solicitude, no frank avowal of his sufferings, but only the dry answer, *I am doing well.*[1] But, however this may be, neither symptoms nor rumours had so much effect on the general belief as the apprehensions excited by the character of the personages between whom Nero divided the military command which had reposed in the hands of Burrhus. Fenius Rufus was timid and indolent, ready to please either prince or people by any base acquiescence: but the wickedness of Tigellinus was more active; already infamous as the partner of his master's debaucheries, he became the worst adviser of his tyranny, and the willing instrument of his cruelties.[2] Such were the ministers to whom Nero instinctively resorted, a bad man and a weak man; the one to contrive crimes, the other to sanction them. And at this moment he might have a special motive for ridding himself of a brave and honest adviser; for he was meditating a divorce from Octavia, which Burrhus sturdily opposed as unjust and impolitic. When urged by the emperor to accede to it, he had bluntly replied, (such at least was the reply the Romans delighted to

Elevation of Tigellinus.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 51.

[2] Tac. *l. c.*; Dion, lxii. 13. This seems to have been the first occasion of dividing the prefecture between two, the plan recommended by Mæcenas according to Dion (lii. 24.): τῶν δὲ δὴ ἱππέων δύο τοὺς ἀρίστους τῆς περί σε φρουρᾶς ἄρχειν,

ascribe to him): *If you dismiss the daughter of Claudius, restore at least the empire which was her dowry.*[1]

Seneca attempts to withdraw from public life.

The death of Burrhus helped to break down the influence of Seneca also. This result, however, flowed in a great measure from the blind jealousy of the nobles themselves. It was natural that they should regard as an upstart the provincial, the sophist, the son of the grammarian: they might cavil at the liberality of his views, and impugn his influence as pernicious. From them, probably, came the accusations which were now heaped on the surviving guardian of Nero's innocence, and which Nero showed himself little anxious to baffle. The riches Seneca had acquired were imputed to him as a crime; it was insinuated that the frugal sage had amassed them to hatch treason and corrupt the populace. It was pretended moreover that he vaunted himself the prince's master in eloquence and poetry, disparaging at the same time the excellence he could not hope to rival in music and charioteering. Nero's petty and vindictive spirit was an instrument easily played upon. Seneca was not blind to the shy consciousness which shunned his presence. Fear and habit alone continued to preserve his life. Now was the time to take the course which he had long meditated, as the means of escaping from danger. He pleaded age and ill health, and demanded leave to withdraw from court; at the same time he offered to relinquish the wealth which rendered him, as he knew, most obnoxious. Such tokens of distrust alarmed Nero. He set himself to caress and cajole; his blandishments were fascinating, but his entreaties were in fact commands; and Seneca found his escape cut off, without

[1] Both Dion and Suetonius ascribe the death of Burrhus more confidently to poison. The former writer remarks the rude freedom of speech in which the prefect indulged (lxii. 13.).

being for a moment deceived as to the imminence of his peril. Muttering to himself or his friends the wisest maxims of his school, he renounced all outward show, either of wealth or influence, and pretended to devote himself more earnestly than ever to philosophic abstraction.[1]

Fatal influence of Tigellinus.

Although the ostensible authority over the prætorians might be divided between Rufus and Tigellinus, it was not long before the entire confidence of the emperor was given to a single favourite. Rufus, indeed, owed his elevation primarily to the good-will of the populace, to whom he was endeared by the liberality in dispensing their dole of grain without making a profit himself; he had also been admitted to the friendship of Agrippina; and on both these accounts he became an object of suspicion to Nero. But his colleague, a man of obscure birth and of no pretensions to distinction or popularity, was better fitted to obtain a tyrant's confidence. This confidence once acquired he sought successfully to keep by humouring the prince's passions, and plunging him into crimes on the plea of safety and necessity.

Execution of Rubellius Plautus and Cornelius Sulla.

The first victims to this man's intrigues were Plautus and Sulla, personages of high rank and consideration, of whom Nero, as the favourite knew, was painfully jealous. Rubellius Plautus, whose relation to the imperial family has been before noticed, was generally respected for his character; his name was connected accordingly with the plot which Silana had ventured to impute to Agrippina; and recently on the appearance of a comet which was supposed to portend the

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 53—56. The fears of Seneca and the artifices of Nero are set forth in a dialogue between them. Our dramatic fabulist never wears the historian's veil more loosely than in this scene, which assuredly was never acted, and still less could have been reported.

fall of the reigning prince, it was to him that they had turned their eyes as the fittest and most natural successor.[1] Nero had recommended his kinsman to remove from Rome to his estates in Asia; and here Plautus had resided since 813 with his wife and a modest retinue of slaves, abstaining from all participation in affairs. Still Nero watched him with anxiety, while Tigellinus continued to insist upon the birth, the wealth, and the reputation of the exile, and the proximity of his retreat to the armies of Syria. It was determined in secret conclave that his life should be taken, and for this purpose a centurion with sixty soldiers, under the orders of an eunuch of the palace, was despatched from Rome. Sulla, meanwhile, had been removed to Massilia: he was poor while Plautus was rich; he was despicable in character, while Plautus was highly esteemed; but the nobility of his descent and the name of the great dictator could be objected against him, and the Germanic legions, it was thought, might possibly attach themselves to him. Such were the alarms of the unwarlike stripling, who kept a handful of guards in his service only by largesses and caresses.[2] Sulla's fate was soon decided. It required but six days for Nero's myrmidons to reach the coast of Gaul, and the exile was already slain and his head brought to the emperor, while the murderers of Plautus were still on their journey. As soon as it was known in the

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 19., xiv. 22.: "Quasi jam depulso Nerone, quisnam deligeretur anquirebant; et omnium ore Rubellius Plautus celebrabatur."

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 57.: "Propinquos huic Orientis, illi Germaniæ exercitus . . . . erectas Gallias ad nomen dictatorium." The Narbonensis, as has been remarked more than once in the course of this history, was closely connected with the old senatorial party under Pompeius, Domitius, and Fonteius. It is curious to find this connexion again referred to, after all the pains the Cæsars had taken to undo it. It is not impossible that the democratic emperor may have been reminded of it by the recent attempt of Gætulicus to assert his independence in that quarter.

city that this precious life was also in danger, some of his kinsmen hastened to advertise him, and their warnings, with exhortations to resist and dare the worst, reached him before the messengers of death arrived. It seems strange, indeed, that the victim should have made no effort to escape or to resist.[1] All Asia lay before him for flight: the legions of the East were commanded by Corbulo, whose fame made him odious to the emperor. But Plautus was unmoved: whether he despaired of escaping or defending himself, or was actually weary of the suspense of his position, or whether he hoped by submission to avert the confiscation of his patrimony, he calmly pursued his exercises and studies, and was found at last by his assassins unrobed for the games of the palæstra. The eunuch looked on while the centurion struck the victim's head off. When the trophy was brought to Rome, Nero is said to have exclaimed, that he was now free to effect his marriage with Poppæa, without fear of a rival to profit by the public commiseration for Octavia. But he pretended to be delivered from two dangerous adversaries, and required the senate to congratulate him, and decree a thanksgiving for the state preserved and a revolution averted.[2]

Further development of Nero's cruelty.

Thus at the close of the eighth year of his principate did Nero exhibit himself, almost without disguise, as a vulgar tyrant, timid and sanguinary, cutting off one by one the most eminent around him in station or virtue. From this

[1] Many of my readers will remember Gibbon's remark, and the striking note appended to it: "To resist was fatal; and it was impossible to fly. . . . Under Tiberius a Roman knight attempted to fly to the Parthians. He was stopped in the straits of Sicily; but so little danger did there appear in the example that the most jealous of tyrants disdained to punish it." See Tac. *Ann.* vi. 14. Nevertheless the explanation must be felt to be unsatisfactory. I can only refer, in addition, 1. to the gross apathy with regard to death in which the Romans were now generally sunk; and 2. to their singular abhorrence of exile among strangers.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 57—59.

time no senator could fail to see that his own life hung only on the caprice of a master, and of the creatures who surrounded him. It was impossible for him to impose on himself, any more than on the prince, by the abject servility of his adulation. Yet having once devoted himself to soothing the monster by caresses, all his moral courage deserted him; condemned by his own conscience, he had no prop to lean on; there seemed no other course for him but to repeat and daily increase the dose of flattery, to crouch more obsequiously under every act of cruelty and oppression; only to hope that his own turn of suffering might come the last. Seneca's influence was gone. It is some satisfaction to believe that the crimes which followed were neither suggested nor excused by this preacher of expediency; and we may hope that, at last, when his doctrines were reproved by the result, he learned to detest the subterfuges under which he had sheltered his own dereliction from honesty and virtue. The tyrant's passions now ranged unrestrained. The crime he had long prepared was about to be consummated. To the child-wife to whom he was united, he never felt nor pretended attachment. Their cohabitation had been brief and barren. Octavia was too artless to raise any obstacle to his licentious amours. Yet, as the daughter of Messalina, even her existence would remind him of the crimes which had raised him to power: as the child of Claudius, the people, with their usual caprice, might lavish upon her the favour they had withheld from her father. To these obvious motives for jealousy was added the fierce ambition of Poppæa, who demanded of her lover the last proof of his devotion. Still some pretext was necessary, and the barrenness of the deserted wife was alleged as a reason for repudiating her. She was required to remove from the palace; but at the same time the house of Burrhus and the

Fall of Octavia.

estates of Plautus were, with a show of liberality, assigned to her. The marriage with Poppæa followed only twelve days later. The intruder was now in a position to destroy the victim she had injured. She contrived an accusation against her of adultery with a slave; her maids were tortured to extort evidence of her guilt; and Tigellinus paid court to the reigning favourite by presiding at the foul examination. Well did he earn the scathing sarcasm which clings like the shirt of Nessus to his name.[1] Yet the pretended revelations thus odiously obtained hardly gave a colour to the harsh measure of sending her to a place of custody in Campania; and when the populace, excited by such great and unmerited misfortunes, murmured against the decree, Nero found it necessary to recal her. Thereupon the citizens rushed tumultuously to the Capitol to sacrifice to the national divinities; they overthrew all the statues of Poppæa within their reach, while they crowned Octavia's with flowers. They crowded about the palace, and filled its courts: the emperor dispersed them with a military force, and replaced the images of his paramour. Yet he dared not persist in this defiance: trembling and irresolute, he neither dared to retain Poppæa in the palace, nor could he determine to restore Octavia to her place and rights. If, while still absent in Campania, her name alone sufficed to raise a tumult, what, he asked, might be the effect of her actual return to the city? But the charges hitherto made against her had failed of reasonable proof: even if proved, an intrigue with a slave deserved, in Roman eyes, neither the name nor punishment of treason. Another charge must be invented, another connexion, more capable of such an imputation, must be fabricated. Nero had long loathed the sight of Anicetus, the contriver of his mother's murder. Strange to

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 60.; Dion, lii. 13.

relate, he induced him, by extraordinary promises, to avow an amour with the wretched princess. For the present he must be banished, for appearance sake, to an island; but he should reap ample rewards at a later period. This confession was enough. A charge not of adultery, but of Majesty, was founded upon it; for the captain of the fleet was capable of guilty aspirations; and, with additional insults to her outraged innocence, Octavia was imprisoned in Pandateria. Familiar as the Romans had now become with the banishment of grave and noble matrons, they were not insensible to the cruel aggravations of her lot. The Cæsarean princesses who had thus suffered before her, the Julias and Agrippinas, had at least attained the strength and fortitude of mature years; *they had seen some happy days;* they had the consolation, for such it was regarded in the creed of Paganism, of reflecting in their sorrow that they had had a portion, at least, of the common enjoyments of life. But to Octavia her marriage had been no other than a funeral: led as she was to a house where everything was funereal and fatal; where her father, and soon afterwards her brother, had been poisoned; where a maid had become more powerful than her mistress; where a paramour had supplanted the lawful spouse; lastly, where she had been branded with a crime more hateful to her than the worst of deaths.[1]

Her banishment.

The poor child had not yet attained her twentieth birthday, when, encompassed by soldiers and centurions, she augured too surely that the days of her existence were numbered. Still clinging with agony to life, she proclaimed in vain

Her death.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 63.: "Nuptiarum dies loco funeris fuit, deductæ in domum in qua nihil nisi luctuosum haberet, erepto per venenum patre et statim fratre: tum ancilla domina validior; et Poppæa non nisi in perniciem uxoris nupta: postremo crimen omni exitio gravius."

that she was now no more than Cæsar's widow, no more than his sister, and invoked the names of their common kindred, the offspring of Germanicus, the name of Agrippina herself, during whose power her union, if unhappy, had at least been protected. After a few days she was seized and bound, and her veins opened with the knife; she fainted, and the blood refused to flow; she was finally stifled by the fumes of a warm bath. Her head was severed from her body, and carried to the cruel Poppæa. Vows and sacrifices were offered to the Gods by a decree of the senate: and so, says the historian, we are henceforth to understand, without special mention, that whenever any atrocious barbarity was perpetrated by the emperor, the triumph of his personal selfishness was celebrated with the same ceremonies as had once signalized the victories of the Roman people.

Nero had now cleared away all partners or rivals of his power in his own family. He remained alone, the last of a race which he was not destined to perpetuate. Nevertheless, his causes of apprehension were not removed by these hideous massacres. He had exchanged the jealousy of a kinsman for the enmity of the whole world. He turned from nobler victims to the vain and wealthy freedmen of his own household. Doryphorus, the secretary of the palace, was put to death for the opposition he had presumed to offer to the nuptials of Poppæa; unless, indeed, the riches he had amassed in the imperial service were the real cause of his destruction, as of that of Pallas, for whose natural death, aged as he now was, the prince was tired of waiting.[1] The wealth of Seneca, also, for he still had the reputation of wealth, tempted Nero's cupidity; and he listened eagerly to accusations of conspiracy which the flatterers of power

Prosecution of wealthy freedmen, Doryphorus and Pallas.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 65.

contrived to forge against the fallen minister. But the charge against him in connexion with the illustrious Piso was at least premature; it was triumphantly rebutted, and the prince acquiesced reluctantly in his escape for a season. The man of peace was provoked at last to self-defence. Piso, awakened to his danger, embarked soon afterwards in a real conspiracy, and we shall have reason to suspect that Seneca himself was not unconnected with that formidable enterprise.[1]

Charge against Seneca rebutted.

The prodigality of the emperor's pastimes was thus driving him to the sanguinary measures by which tyrants fill their coffers; and the discovery how easy was the process, how submissive were the victims, prompted him to indulge his passions without restraint. His licentiousness became now as reckless as his cruelty. He had sunk already to the degradation of singing and playing in public; but there was still a lower depth which his abandoned tastes and thirst for vulgar admiration tempted him to fathom. As a child his talk had been of the Greens and Blues; his counters had been cars of ivory. The passion, checked by his preceptors, had been cherished up to manhood, and since he had become his own master he had thrown off gradually all restraint in indulging it. From his private circus in the gardens of the Vatican, from the arena of Grecian colonies in Campania, he descended at last to the Circus Maximus at Rome, and, placing a freedman in the imperial tribune to fling the kerchief for a signal, drove his chariot victoriously round the goal, before the eyes of 200,000 citizens. The rabble greeted him with delight; so soon had they forgotten their sympathy with Octavia; so heedless were they of the shame of their country. The senators clapped their hands reluctantly, shuddering

Nero drives his chariot in the Circus Maximus.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 65.

the while at the downfall of ancient principles, and trembling at every shout for their own lives and fortunes.[1]

Nero's presence at Rome desired both by the populace and the senate. A. D. 63. A. U. 816.

Nero had proposed at this period to visit Greece and Egypt, but, when he renounced this intention, he assigned as a reason his people's wish to retain him among them as the leader of all their amusements. Possibly they apprehended—so completely did they now regard the emperor's presence as the pledge of their subsistence—that in his absence the regular supplies of the city would be impeded or withheld.[2] It was this general conviction of the necessity of the Prince to the Subject, that assured him of their protection, and made him so formidable to the helpless senate. To attempt the life of Cæsar, tyrant and monster though he might be, was an outrage on the lives and fortunes of the people whose existence was bound up with his. Distracted by apprehensions on either side, the senators knew not whether to wish for their master's absence or his presence among them; but in Rome he was at least the guardian of public tranquillity, and this tranquillity, by his name, his guards, or his largesses, he contrived successfully to maintain.

Infamous debauchery publicly encouraged by Nero.

Never, on the other hand, were the citizens so good-humoured, as when they saw their prince enjoying himself among them. The prince, too, on his part, wished it to appear that he was never so happy as when exhibiting his private pleasures to the eyes of his people. The banquets he gave were no longer to be

[1] Suet. *Ner.* 22. The date of this odious exhibition cannot be fixed precisely. It must have been later than the institution of the Neronia in 813, and before 817, from an anecdote in Tacitus (*Ann.* xv. 44.).

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xv. 36.: "Talia plebi volentia fuere, voluptatum cupidine, et quæ præcipua cura est, rei frumentariæ angustias, si abesset, metuenti."

hidden in the recesses of the palace. In the Campus Martius, in the Circus Maximus, in the theatres and other open places, a series of entertainments rapidly followed: and not here only, but in every public spot in the city, the emperor's table was spread from day to day, and all the world was welcome to see him dine, if not to partake of his dinner. Nor were gluttony and drinking the only intemperance he thus shamelessly practised and more shamelessly displayed. To such degradation had he reduced the citizens, that they were not offended by the most naked exhibitions of wantonness. Whatever allowance we may make for the indignant exaggerations of later moralists, or for the prurient imaginations of the narrators, it seems impossible to question the fact of the prostitution he encouraged, ordered, and even compelled. To Tigellinus was ascribed the most monstrous of all his inventions. On one occasion, a table was spread for the emperor and his guests on a raft in the Basin of Agrippa, and numerous vessels, decked with gold, silver, and ivory, attended with the materials and ministers of the repast. The colonnades which encircled the water were filled partly with invited spectators; but certain places were reserved for women of all ranks, even for matrons and virgins, who were surrendered to them without reserve. Finally, one day Nero, who had already thrown off all restraints of decency and self-respect in his own person, went through the marriage ceremony, arrayed in veil, necklace, and girdle, before the priests and soothsayers, with the vilest of his male associates.[1]

[1] The reader may compare for himself Tac. *Ann.* xv. 37.; Suet. *Ner.* 27—29.; Dion, lxii. 15. It is not worth while to point out some apparent discrepancies, or suggest possible exaggerations, especially in Dion's account: *καὶ ἦν ἐξουσία παντὶ τῷ βουλομένῳ σχεῖν ἣν ἤθελεν· οὐ γὰρ ἐξῆν αὐτοῖς οὐδ᾽ ἕνα ἀπαρνήσασθαι*: which is followed by a trait of nature which redeems it from utter incredibility: *ὠθισμοί τε καὶ πληγαὶ καὶ θόρυβοι* . . . . *καὶ ἄνδρες τε ἐκ τούτων συχνοὶ*

Let this suffice:—such things have occurred perhaps, in other times and other places; perhaps they have been recorded by historians as well as satirists: but the foul annals of the period before us have attained an unfortunate distinction from the genius which has been engaged in illustrating them. While the world endures, the iniquities of Nero will retain their preeminence in infamy, and it will be equally impossible to recount them at length, or to pass them over in silence.

Great conflagration in Rome.

But in the midst of these horrors, which steeped in the same fearful guilt the people and the prince together, Providence was preparing an awful chastisement; and was about to overwhelm Rome, like the cities of the Plain, in a sheet of retributive fire. Crowded, as the mass of the citizens were, in their close wooden dwelling-chambers, accidents were constantly occurring which involved whole streets and quarters of the city in wide-spreading conflagrations, and the efforts of the night-watch to stem these outbursts of fire, with few of the appliances, and little perhaps even of the discipline, of our modern police, were but imperfectly effectual. But the greatest of all the fires which desolated Rome was that which broke out on the 19th of July, in the year 817, the tenth of Nero, which began at the eastern end of the Circus, abutting on the valley between the Palatine and the Cælian hills.[1] Against the outer walls of this edifice leaned a mass of wooden booths and stores filled chiefly with

ἐφθάρησαν. Modern writers, as usual, have taken the most unfavourable view, and have supposed the entertainment in Agrippa's Basin to have been open to all the world.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xv. 38.: "Initium in ea parte Circi ortum quæ Palatino Cælioque montibus contigua est . . . . simul cœptus ignis . . . . longitudinem Circi corripuit." In the second clause the word Circus evidently means the edifice so called, and, accordingly, I give the same interpretation to it in the first. But no part of the Circus can properly be said to adjoin the Palatine

combustible articles. The wind from the east drove the flames towards the corner of the Palatine, whence they forked in two directions, following the draught of the valleys. At neither point were they encountered by the massive masonry of halls or temples, till they had gained such head, that the mere intensity of the heat crumbled brick and stone like paper. The Circus itself was filled from end to end with wooden galleries, along which the fire coursed with a speed which defied all check and pursuit. The flames shot up to the heights adjacent, and swept the basements of many noble structures on the Palatine and Aventine. Again they plunged into the lowest levels of the city, the dense habitations and narrow winding streets of the Velabrum and Forum Boarium, till stopped by the river and the walls. At the same time another torrent rushed towards the Velia and the Esquiline, and sucked up all the dwellings within its reach, till it was finally arrested by the cliffs beneath the gardens of Mæcenas. Amidst the horror and confusion of the scene, the smoke, the blaze, the din and the scorching heat with half the population, bond and free, cast loose and houseless into the streets, ruffians were seen to thrust blazing brands into the buildings, who affirmed, when seized by the indignant sufferers, that they were acting with orders; and the crime, which was probably the desperate resource of slaves and robbers, was imputed by fierce suspicions to the government itself.[1]

and the Cælian; and I think it possible that in the first passage Tacitus means, not the building, but the quarter of the city which went by the name of Circus Maximus. Dion Hal. (iii. 68.) describes the Circus and its exterior galleries: *ἔξωθεν περὶ τὸν ἱππόδρομον ἑτέρα στόα μονόστεγος ἐργαστήρια ἔχουσα ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ οἰκήσεις ὑπὲρ αὐτά.*

[1] Tac. *l. c.*: "Nec quisquam defendere audebat, crebris multorum minis restinguere prohibentium, et quia alii palam faces jaciebant atque sibi auctorem esse vociferabantur, sive ut raptus licentius exercerent seu jussu." Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* xvii. 1), Dion (lxii. 17, 18.),

At such a moment of sorrow and consternation, every trifle is seized to confirm the suspicion of foul play. The flames, it seems, had subsided after raging for six days, and the wretched outcasts were beginning to take breath and visit the ruins of their habitations, when a second conflagration burst out in a different quarter. This fire commenced at the point where the Æmilian gardens of Tigellinus abutted on the outskirts of the city beneath the Pincian hill; and it was on Tigellinus himself, the object already of popular scorn if not of anger, that the suspicion now fell. The wind, it seems, had now changed, for the fire spread from the north-west towards the Quirinal and the Viminal, destroying the buildings, more sparsely planted, of the quarter denominated the Via Lata. Three days exhausted the fury of this second visitation, in which the loss of life and property was less, but the edifices it overthrew were generally of greater interest, shrines and temples of the gods, and halls and porticos devoted to the amusement or convenience of the people. Altogether the disaster, whether it sprang from accident or design, involved nearly the whole of Rome. Of the fourteen regions of the city, three, we are assured, were entirely destroyed; while seven others were injured more or less severely: four only of the whole number escaped unhurt.[1] The fire made a

The fire bursts out a second time.

and Suetonius (*Ner.* 38.) attribute the fire to Nero's orders without hesitation, a view which generally recommended itself to the ancients.

[1] The three quarters which are said to have been destroyed must have been the Circus Max. (XI.), the Palatium (X.), and Isis and Serapis (III.). I must question, however, the entire destruction of the great edifices on the Palatine: the temple of Apollo is mentioned only two years later by Suetonius (*Ner.* 25.), and the Sibylline oracles kept in it (comp. Amm. Marcell. xxiii. 3.) were consulted immediately afterwards. The destruction of the Palatine library in the fire of Commodus, a hundred and fifty years later, is mentioned by Galenus (*de Compos. Medicam.* i. 1.). Pliny speaks, however, of the temple of the Palatium, dedicated to Augustus by Livia, as

complete clearance of the central quarters, leaving, perhaps, but few public buildings erect even on the Palatine and Aventine; but it was, for the most part, hemmed in by the crests of the surrounding eminences, and confined to the seething crater which had been the cradle of the Roman people. The day of its outburst, it was remarked, was that of the first burning of Rome by the Gauls, and some curious calculators computed that the addition of an equal number of years, months, and days together, would give the complete period which had elapsed in the long interval of her greatness.[1] Of the number of houses and insulæ destroyed, Tacitus does not venture to hazard a statement; he only tantalizes us by his

consumed, *H. N.* xii. 42. The seven quarters partially injured appear to have been, first the Aventinus (XIII.), Piscina Publica (XII.), Via Sacra (IV.), Cælimontana (II.), and Forum Romanum (VIII.); yet the Capitoline was certainly untouched, and there is no reason to believe that the temples and basilicas which encompassed the forum suffered. In the second fire the Via Lata (VII.) and a great part of the Circus Flaminius (IX.) were devastated. The four which wholly escaped were the Transtiberina (XIV.), the Esquilina (V.), the Alta Semita (VI.), and the Porta Capena (I.). See Bunsen's *Rom.* i. 191. The nine days' duration is proved, not from the historians (Tacitus notes only the six days of the first fire), but by an inscription, Gruter, 61. 3. (Hoeck, p. 374. note). The great fire of London lasted only four days, and swept an area of 436 acres; while the space through which this conflagration raged, though with less complete destruction, must have comprised at least one-third of Rome, or not less than three times that extent. Comp. Lambert's *Hist. of London*, ii. 91.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xv. 41.: "Fuere qui adnotarent XIV. Kal. Sext. principium incendii hujus ortum quo et Senones captam Urbem inflammaverant: alii eo usque curæ progressi sunt ut *totidem annos mensesque et dies* inter utraque incendia numerent." The interpreters have given up generally the attempt to explain this obscure passage; but the principle of Grotefend's suggestion, which I take from Ritter's note, seems peculiarly happy. Between 19 July, 364, the received date of the Gaulish fire, and 19 July, 817, are exactly 453 years; and the addition of 417 years, 417 months, and 417 days, completes this period wanting about 40 days. If, on the other hand, we suppose these calculators to have taken 363 for the date of the Gaulish fire, the interval will be 454 years, and 418 years + 418 months + 418 days = 454 years − 8 days only

slender notice of the famous fanes and monuments which sank in the common ruin. Among them were the temple of Diana, which Servius Tullius had erected; the shrine and altar of Hercules, consecrated by Evander, as affirmed in the tradition impressed upon us by Virgil[1]; the Romulean temple of Jupiter Stator, the remembrance of which thrilled the soul of the banished Ovid[2]; the little Regia of Numa, which armed so many a sarcasm against the pride of consuls and imperators; the sanctuary of Vesta herself, with the Palladium, the Penates, and the ever-glowing hearth of the Roman people. But the loss of these decayed, though venerable, objects was not the worst disaster. Many an unblemished masterpiece of the Grecian pencil, or chisel, or graver,—the prize of victory,—was devoured by the flames; and amidst all the splendour with which Rome rose afterwards from her ashes, old men could lament to the historian the irreparable sacrifice of these ancient glories.[3] Writings and documents of no common interest may have perished at the same time irrecoverably; and with them, trophies, images, and family devices. At a moment when the heads of patrician houses were falling rapidly by the sword, the loss of such memorials was the more deplorable; and from this epoch we may date the decay, which we shall soon discover, in the domestic traditions of the nobles.

[1] Virg. *Æn.* viii. 270.:

"Hanc aram luco statuit, quæ maxima semper
Dicetur nobis, et erit quæ maxima semper."

[2] Ovid. *Trist.* iii. 1—49.:

"Adjice servatis unum, pater optime, civem . . . .
Me miserum! vereorque locum, venerorpue potentem."

[3] Suet. *Ner.* 38.: "Domus priscorum ducum hostilibus adhuc spoliis adornatæ, Deorumque ædes, ... et quicquid visendum et memorabile ex antiquitate duraverat." Tac. *l. c.*: "Monumenta ingeniorum antiqua et incorrupta:" which Lipsius characteristically interprets of the autograph writings of the ancients, so vainly regretted by reviving letters.

The fire imputed by the populace to Nero himself.

Nero was at Antium, nor did he quit that favourite residence till apprised that the flames had reached the long colonnades with which he had connected the mansion on the Palatine with the villa of Mæcenas. It would seem that with due energy the progress of the fire along these galleries might have been cut off; but the attempt was either not made, or made too late, and the flames, it is said, extended to the palace, and involved it, or at least some portion of it, in the general ruin.[1] The injury indeed to Nero's own dwelling was greatly exaggerated, possibly to make him appear to have suffered equally with his people. Altogether, however, the disaster was the greatest that had befallen the city, since the era of the Gaulish invasion. The mansions of the nobles were scathed, but the cabins of the populace were annihilated. The prince was popularly held responsible for every public calamity; and when the rumour, not improbable in itself, was circulated, that Nero had watched the conflagration from the towers of his villa, and chaunted the *Sack of Troy* to his own lyre, the sufferers were prone to believe that he had commanded the city to be fired, and forbidden the flames to be extinguished.[2] Once,

[1] The words of Tacitus are these (c. 39.): "Eo in tempore Nero, Antii agens, non ante in urbem regressus est quam *domui ejus*, qua palatium et Mæcenatis hortos *continuaverat*, ignis propinquaret. Neque tamen sisti potuit quin et palatium et domus et cuncta circum haurirentur." I have expressed in the text the qualification I must put on these words. There must have been a colonnade or gallery across the Velia to connect the buildings on the Palatine and the Esquiline, probably a viaduct, like the bridge of Caius across the Velabrum, with carriage-way underneath. This construction was possibly of wood. The palace on the Palatine may have been injured, but it could not have been destroyed without the destruction of every other edifice on that hill. That the other portion of the palace, the villa of Mæcenas on the Esquiline, wholly escaped seems certain from the anecdote which follows.

[2] Suet. *Ner.* 38.: "Hoc incendium ex turre Mæcenatiana prospectans, lætusque flammæ ut aiebat pulchritudine, ἅλωσιν Ilii in illo suo scenico habitu decantavit." Comp. Dion, lxii. 29.; Juvenal, viii. 219.

it was said, when the line before quoted by Tiberius, *After my death perish the world in fire,* was recited to him; *Nay, in my lifetime,* had been his fiendish reply. Another suspicion, hardly less horrible, prevailed, that he had caused the destruction of the ancient city, not out of pure wantonness, but in order to rebuild it more magnificently, and dignify the new Rome with his own name.[1] Accordingly, whatever favour the populace had hitherto entertained towards the chief who flattered and amused them, they were now fiercely exasperated. It was to little purpose that he provided accommodation for the shelter of the houseless multitudes, and supplied with anxious care their most pressing necessities.[2] It was in vain that the gods were soothed with holocausts, and the Sibyls' books consulted for expiations; that vows were offered to Vulcan, Ceres and Proserpine, and Juno propitiated by processions of Roman matrons. The people continued to mutter their dissatisfaction with increasing significance; it was necessary to divert their suspicions by offering them another victim; and Nero seems to have saved himself at last, by sacrificing the little band of alien sectaries, already the objects of their hatred and reviling, *to whom the vulgar gave the name of Christians.*[3]

[1] Suetonius, a faithful expounder of popular traditions, more than insinuates this charge: "Quasi offensus deformitate veterum ædificiorum, et angustiis flexurisque vicorum, incendit urbem." *Ner.* 38.

[2] Tac. *l.c.*: "Solatium populo exturbato et profugo campum Martis et monumenta Agrippæ; hortos quin etiam suos patefecit; et subitaria ædificia exstruxit quæ multitudinem inopem acciperent: subvectaque utensilia ab Ostia et propinquis municipiis; pretiumque frumenti minutum usque ad ternos nummos. Quæ, quanquam popularia, in irritum cadebant, quia pervaserat rumor, ipso tempore flagrantis urbis inisse eum domesticam scenam, et cecinisse Trojanum excidium, præsentia mala vetustis cladibus assimulantem."

[3] Tac. *Ann.* xv. 44.: "Ergo abolendo rumori Nero subdidit reos . . . . quos per flagitia invisos vulgus Christianos appellabat. Auctor nominis ejus Christus," &c. I shall enter in another place into the question, who were the persons to whom the vulgar applied this name? In the text I confine myself as closely as possible to the words of Tacitus.

This name, says Tacitus in a famous passage in his Annals, *was derived from one Christus, who was executed in the reign of Tiberius by the procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate. This accursed superstition, for a moment repressed, spread again, not over Judea only, the source of this evil, but the City also, whither all things vile and shameful find room and reception. Accordingly,* he adds, *those only were first arrested who avowed themselves of that sect, afterwards a vast number discovered by them, who were convicted, not so much on the charge of burning, as for their general hatred to mankind. Their execution was accompanied with mockery. They were wrapped in skins to be torn in pieces by dogs, or crucified, and thus set on fire to serve as torches by night. Nero lent his own gardens for the spectacle, and gave a chariot race on the occasion, at which he mingled freely with the multitude in the garb of a driver, or actually holding the reins. The populace, however, turned with their usual levity to compassion for the sufferers, justly odious though they were held to be; for they felt that it was not for their actual guilt nor the common weal that they were punished, but to glut the ferocity of a single tyrant.*[1]

The rebuilding of Rome.

This horrid sacrifice, so deeply impressive to the minds of sixty generations of Christians, ruffled then for a moment the feelings of Roman society, and excited perhaps in the heart of the historian, impassive as he constrains himself to

[1] This remarkable and often cited passage has several difficulties. I understand the "odium generis humani" to mean, not the hatred in which these sectaries were held, but rather their reputed enmity towards all others. It is a question whether the confession mentioned was of the burning or only of the Christian belief: I suppose the latter: "aut flammandi" is obscure in construction, but the sense cannot be doubtful: "sontes" may apply to the specific charge, meaning that the people really believed them guilty of it, or it may relate to the crime of their creed generally. The gardens referred to were on the slope of the Vatican, and embraced, it is supposed, the site of the Place and possibly of the Church of St. Peter's. The obelisk

appear, more pity, more wonder, more reflection at least, than he has deigned to intimate. But a few days passed, and when the people looked again around them, they beheld the reconstruction of their smoking city commencing with extraordinary vigour. The decision with which the plans of the government were taken, must appear to us perfectly amazing. The rebuilding of so large a portion of the largest of ancient cities on a general design, including the construction of a palace, to cover, or at least embrace with all its adjuncts, some hundreds of acres, was carried into execution without a moment's delay, and seems to have been effected in the course of the four years which intervened to the death of Nero.[1] The city of the plebs, a collection of narrow winding lanes which crept along the hollows at the foot of the seven hills, thronged with high unsightly masses of brick or woodwork, among which its shifting crowds could with difficulty wind their way, had long been an eyesore to the denizens of the patrician mansions above, constructed in the graceful style of Greece, their level lines of marble masonry flanked with airy colonnades, and interspersed with broad courts and gardens. This combination, indeed, or contrast of the ancient and the modern, the grotesque and the elegant, this upper growth of aristocratic luxury culminating above the smoky hives of vulgar industry, must have given a character to the whole eminently striking and picturesque. Rome was in-

which now fronts that church stood on the spina of Nero's Circus, certainly not far from its present position. Mosheim (*de Reb. Chr. ante Constant.* sæc. 1. §,34.) fixes the beginning of this persecution to the middle of the November of this year.

[1] The conflagration took place in July, 817. Nero's death followed in June, 821; but it would appear that the rebuilding had been completed before that time; certainly the palace had been completed much earlier. It is impossible not to suspect, from this and other circumstances, that the destruction was less extensive than has been represented. The temple of Apollo—apparently that on the Palatine —is mentioned in the year 822 (Tac. *Hist.* iii 65.).

deed a double city, half Greek and half Italian. The elements of change long operating in its manners were equally active in its external development. Grecian forms were steadily encroaching on the indigenous features of its architecture. To reform, to improve, had been in fact to copy foreign, and to displace native, models. The marble Rome of Augustus, restorer as he professed himself, was a Grecian mask applied to a Roman countenance. Every new temple or theatre, bath or fountain, added another Hellenic object to the scene, and aided in this gradual disintegration. Nero in all his tastes was Grecian or Oriental; yet when this grand opportunity offered for recasting the lower city on the model he admired, the promptness with which he seized it shows that he followed an instinct of the times, and not a mere caprice of his own. The architects were ready at once with their plans for a total reconstruction after the fashion of Athens or Antioch, a style more familiar to their schools than the obsolete Italian. After the fire of the Gauls Rome had been rebuilt by the citizens themselves, each man for himself from his own notions and resources; the whole resulting in manifold combinations of a few simple elements, the wooden shed, the broad brick wall, the narrow windows, the projecting eaves, the pointed gable.[1] But after Nero's fire restoration was the work of the government; the citizens, the mass at least of the lower classes who still dwelt in the valleys, were not rich enough to build for themselves, even had they been suffered to do so; the treasury supplied them with money, but at the same time

[1] The fastigiata and pectinata tecta seem to imply something more than the Greek pediment, and to have been in common use for dwelling houses, not only for public buildings. There is perhaps no distinct notice of gable ends to the ordinary Roman roofs; but the fact that the earliest temples at Rome were thatched, and therefore of course dwellings also, shows that the roofs must have been high-pitched.

provided them with designs: the time had come when the rulers of the state must execute all great public works for the people, and employ the services of a profession to which architecture of a foreign type was alone familiar. The character indeed of the site, and the necessity of lodging vast numbers upon small areas, must have tended to modify the more lax and spacious features of Hellenic architecture; the crowded dwellings of the Suburra and Velabrum could not have been less than fifty, sixty, or even seventy feet in height: but the substitution, to a great extent, of stone for brick or wood in the basement at least of these edifices, the straightening and widening of the streets, and the erection of open colonnades round every block of houses, was the application of a foreign style, which completely changed the external appearance of Rome. On the whole the system of Nero and his architects was both salubrious and convenient, though many citizens, admirers of all things old, continued to lament the disappearance of their dark and tortuous alleys, and to allege, with some justice perhaps, that the narrowness of the avenues and the height of the overhanging edifices had afforded a grateful shade in summer, and protection from the winds in winter.[1]

Extension of Nero's palace or Golden House.

But Nero, we are told, took advantage of the void which had been created for another and more selfish purpose. He determined to extend in various directions the limits of his own residence, and to cover a large portion of the area of Rome with the buildings of the imperial palace. On this point, however, I am constrained to be sceptical. We have already seen that he had before

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xv. 43.: "Erant tamen qui crederent veterem illam formam salubritati magis conduxisse." Whatever we may think of the justice of this complaint, it may be worth remarking, as a sign of the difference in our own ideas and the Roman, that there is no expression of regret for the picturesque features of the ancient city so ruthlessly sacrificed to the taste or judgment of the day.

connected the older residence of the Cæsars, enlarged as it had been by successive occupants, on the Palatine, with the villa of Mæcenas on the Esquiline, by a series of galleries which spanned, perhaps, the hollow between those hills on arches, so as to allow of the circulation of the populace in the most crowded parts of the city below it. Such seems to have been the character of the *Domus Transitoria* or House of Passage, which fell, as we have seen, a prey to the flames. I much question, however, whether either of the edifices which it connected had suffered very severely, and the Golden House, as the restored palace was denominated, was still the old mansion of Augustus and the villa of Mæcenas connected a second time by a long series of columns and arches. It is probable, indeed, that the House of Passage was now considerably enlarged, and made to embrace a vast extent of gardens, with their baths, their fish-ponds, and their storied terraces.[1] Nevertheless, the public must always have had means of communication beneath these galleries, or through them, from the forum to the Cælian hill, and to the Esquiline or Capene gates. We cannot suppose that the emperor's stone walls intercepted the Sacred and the Appian ways. These colonnades, such as I have imagined

[1] This house, says Tacitus, was not so remarkable for its gold and precious stones, as for the gardens it embraced: "arva et stagna, et in modum solitudinum hinc sylvæ, inde aperta spatia et prospectus," c. 42. The taste of the Romans in gardening required geometrical lines of gravel, pavement, box borders, and shrubberies. See the younger Pliny's description of his Tuscan villa (*Ep.* v. 6.), and some of the frescoes still visible on the walls of houses in Pompeii. Matius, the friend of Cæsar, invented the art of cutting yews, box, and cypress into figures of men and animals (Plin. *H. N.* xii. 6.), and this grotesque practice survived to the time of Pliny and Martial (Mart. iii. 58., xii. 50.). Nero, I presume, ventured to discard this formality, and his attempt to restore some natural features to a garden landscape offended the admirers of antiquity. This was the "rure vero barbaroque lætari" of Martial. I refer to Prof. Daubeny's *Lectures on Roman Husbandry*, vii, for these and further details of the subject of Roman gardening.

them, were three in number; each of them, it is said, a mile in length. They reached, it may be presumed, from the bridge of Caius over the Velabrum, which was perhaps destroyed by the fire, and never, as far as we know, rebuilt, almost to the site of S. Maria Maggiore on the Esquiline, and of S. Gregorio on the Cælian, and these were again connected perhaps by a third.[1] The area now filled with the Colosseum was embraced within their ample circuit, and this spot was occupied by a basin of water.[2] It is a pardonable extravagance in Pliny to declare that the city was *encompassed* by the palace of Nero; but this expression, which he has applied also to the far less extensive encroachments of Caius, seems to show that even within the circuit of its ample arcades many houses, streets, and places were surrendered to the occupation of the citizens. We should still less expect strict accuracy in the statements of a pasquinade, which has been preserved to us by Suetonius. Insinuating a direct comparison between the conflagration of the Gauls and of Nero, *Rome*, it said, *will be reduced to a single house: migrate, O Romans, to Veii, like your ancestors before you; if Veii indeed itself be not embraced also by that single house.*[3]

[1] Martial (*de Spect.* 2.) defines the limits of this palace in two directions by the baths of Titus on the Esquiline, and the portico of Claudius, connected, it may be presumed, with his unfinished temple on the Cælian:

"Claudia diffusas ubi porticus explicat umbras,
Ultima pars aulæ deficientis erat."

It has been mentioned that Nero is said to have destroyed the works of the Claudian temple: this, if not a misrepresentation, was probably to make room for his own constructions.

[2] Martial, *l. c.*:

"Hic ubi conspicui venerabilis amphitheatri
Erigitur species, stagna Neronis erant."

Comp. Suet. *Ner.* 31.: "Stagnum maris instar, circumseptum ædificiis ad urbium speciem: rura insuper, arvis atque vinetis, et pascuis silvisque varia."

[3] Suet. *Ner.* 39.:

"Roma domus fiet: Veios migrate Quirites;
Si non et Veios occupet una domus."

But the epithet of Golden, which this palace obtained, was derived from the splendour of its decorations. Externally it was adorned with all the luxury of art and taste at their highest eminence, with gilded roofs and sculptured friezes, and panels of many-coloured marble. Within, it was a rich museum of painting, precious stones, and statuary: amidst the rubbish of its long-ruined chambers some of the choicest works of ancient art have been discovered, and the modern frescoes which we most admire seem to have been copied by stolen glimpses from walls unveiled for a moment and again shrouded in darkness.[1] The grand entrance from the Forum and the Sacred way was adorned with a marble statue of the emperor 120 feet in height, the colossus which afterwards gave its name to the amphitheatre of Vespasian. When Nero at last took possession of this gorgeous habitation, he remarked complacently that *now he was lodged as a man should be.*[2]

Exactions and confiscations required to defray the expense of these constructions.

These vast constructions were planned and executed by the architects Severus and Celer, both of them, it may be remarked, not of Greek but of Roman origin. These men seem to have been bold designers as well as able builders; their profession combined engineering with architecture. They had great influence with their master, and seem to have inspired him with many grand conceptions, the exact purport

[1] Suet. *Ner.* 31.: "In cæteris partibus cuncta auro lita, distincta gemmis unionumque conchis erant. Cœnationes laqueatæ tabulis eburneis versatilibus," &c. The baths of Titus were afterwards erected on a part of this palace on the Esquiline, and stand on its lower chambers, within which the great vase of the Vatican and other monuments of art have been discovered. The Laocoon was found similarly imbedded at no great distance. How such works came to be there left amidst the rubbish seems inexplicable. It is believed that Raphael took the designs of some of his arabesques from paintings revealed in these chambers, which he purposely caused to be filled up again, to conceal the plagiarism.

[2] Martial, i. 2.; Suet. *l.c.*: "Se quasi hominem jam habitare cœpisse."

of which may have been inadequately represented to us. The navigable canal which they projected, from the lake of Avernus and the Julian haven to Rome, was evidently not a mere freak of power, but a work of utility for the transport of grain to the city.[1] The attempt, made in earnest, was probably abandoned from caprice. The rebuilding of Rome in the course of four years tasked all the energies of the artisans of Italy. But the expense of these extraordinary efforts caused on the whole more dangerous discontent than the worst caprices of tyranny; and unless we suppose Nero devoid of the most ordinary foresight, we must allow that he would hardly have caused a conflagration, which could not fail to entangle him in fatal embarrassments. He was compelled to strain the patience of his subjects by increased exactions. An organized system of plunder was now extended throughout the empire, which ruined the citizens, the allies, and the free communities. Nero began by requiring contributions, under the name of free gifts; and neglect in responding to this invitation was visited by heavier imposts. Treasures, human and divine, were swept into the gulf. The temples of Rome itself were denuded of the offerings of ages, the spoil of conquered enemies long hoarded in the shrines of the gods, the trophies of victories and triumphs held sacred through all emergencies, which even Cæsar, who sacked the treasury, had reluctantly respected.[2] From Greece and Asia not the offerings

[1] Nero is said also to have designed extending Rome to Ostia. Suetonius says of his buildings, "Non in alia re damnosior quam in ædificando." The magnificence of his baths continued to be celebrated long after him. Martial says of them, "Quid Nerone pejus? Quid thermis melius Neronianis?" The Church of S. Louis, on the Pincian, is supposed to stand upon them. Ampère, *Hist. Romaine à Rome*, § 3. In the year 817 Nero erected himself also a triumphal arch on the Capitoline, to celebrate his pretended successes against the Parthians. To occupy that sacred site with a monument of personal vanity was an act of unprecedented ostentation. Tac. *Ann.* xv. 18.

[2] Tacitus, xv. 45.

only, but the images of the gods themselves, were carried off by authorized commissioners.[1] Of these Acratus was a freedman of the palace, who retained as a courtier the spirit of a slave[2]; Carrinas Secundus, a freeborn Roman, once a teacher of rhetoric, who had starved at Athens in the practice of his profession, acquired notoriety at Rome, and suffered banishment as a declaimer on tyrannicide, now finished his career as an unscrupulous agent of tyranny.[3] Seneca, as a man of sense and honour, was shocked at these outrages on the national feeling of the Greeks, and distressed lest they should be ascribed to his counsels. Once more he begged leave to retire into privacy. Again disappointed, he affected sickness, and confined himself strictly to his chamber. Some averred that his life was now attempted by poison at Nero's instigation; that he escaped either by the confession of the person employed, or by his own care in abstaining from all suspicious viands, and tasting nothing but plain fruits and vegetables, bread and water. Insults such as these to the faith and feelings of the people were accompanied, no doubt, by cruel extortions and the confiscation of private possessions; and Nero, emboldened by the incredible submission of the world to his feeble sceptre, treated gods and men alike as mere slaves of his will, ordained equally, whether in earth or heaven, for his personal service and gratification. Nevertheless the calamities with which this year closed must

[1] Pausanias refers to the spoliation of the Grecian temples by Nero: v. 25, 26., ix. 27., x. 7. From Delphi he carried off no less than five hundred brazen statues. Caius had robbed the Thespians of a Cupid by Praxiteles, which Claudius restored them. Nero seized it a second time. Comp. Dion Chrys. *Or. Rhod.* p. 355. Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxxiv. 19.

[2] Tac. *l. c.*; Dion Chrys. *l. c.*: *ἴστε γὰρ Ἄκρατος ἐκεῖνος τὴν οἰκουμένην σχεδὸν ἅπασαν περιελθὼν τούτου χάριν.*

[3] For Carrinas see Dion, lix. 20., and compare Juvenal, vii. 204., alluding, as is generally supposed, to the same person.

have struck him with alarm in the midst of his frantic caprices. An outbreak of gladiators at Præneste was speedily suppressed; but it reminded men of the attempt of Spartacus, and the ancient troubles of the republic, and betrayed the fact that the prospect of revolution was contemplated with hope no less than with apprehension. The loss of some galleys on the Campanian coast, through a thoughtless command of the emperor's which their captains dared not disobey, might impress the singer of the Sack of Ilium with Minerva's vengeance on an older sacrilege[1]; while the occurrence of fearful prodigies, of monstrous births, of storms and meteors, above all, the blazing of a comet, extorted from the soothsayers the prophecy of a new rebellion, though they ventured to promise that it should be instantly quelled.[2]

Followed by portents and disasters.

This apprehension of impending change was, indeed, no groundless presentiment. Nero's crimes and follies had been long threatened with retribution;

[1] Virg. *Æn.* xi. 260.: "Scit triste Minervæ
Sidus, et Euboicæ cautes, ultorque Caphareus."
Tac. *Ann.* xv. 46.; "Clades rei navalis, non bello, quippe haud alias tam immota pax." Comp. the fragment of Turnus, Wernsdorf, *Poet. Lat. Min.* iii.: "Et molle imperii senium sub nomine pacis."

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xv. 47.: "Sidus cometes, semper illustri sanguine Neroni expiatum." Seneca's allusion to this comet is curious, if he was conscious of the conspiracy at that moment in agitation. *Nat. Quæst.* vii. 17.: "Qui sub Nerone apparuit et cometis detraxit infamiam." Virgil speaks generally of the evil influence of comets: "Cometæ Sanguinei lugubre rubent." *Æn.* x. 272. The instinct of a later generation made them always presage evil to *tyrants.* Lucan, i. 528.: "Terris mutantem regna cometen." Stat. *Theb.* i. fin.: "Mutent quæ sceptra cometæ." Sil. i. 460.: "Terret fera regna cometes." And so our republican Milton: "Which with fear of change Perplexes monarchs." To the portent of the comet, Tacitus adds: "Bicipites hominum partus . . . natus vitulus cui caput in crure esset." The double head presaged unnatural rivalry. Comp. Lucan, i. 626.:

"Quodque, nefas, nullis impune apparuit extis,
Ecce! videt capiti fibrarum increscere molem
Alterius capitis."

and the murmurs of the injured had deepened into a fixed discontent, which official seers might represent as the token of an occult conspiracy. Among the nobles there were many who complained of personal insults, many whose ambition, whether criminal or honest, had met with unexpected rebuffs, many, no doubt, who had suffered wanton oppression; others who resented the degradation of the republic; lastly, there were some who watched their discontent from a distance, awaiting the moment when they might turn it to their own aggrandisement. It was necessary to fix on some personage around whom the discontented could rally, and whom they could agree to substitute for Nero. There was no idea, in any quarter, of returning to the ancient free state. The pride of independence and mutual equality, once so strong in the Roman aristocracy, had collapsed for ever; to the mass of the people it had never been known. The necessity of monarchy was indeed enforced by practical considerations. No conspiracy could hope for success without the support of the soldiers; the soldiers would not draw their swords for a political abstraction; and any leader to whom they gave their allegiance, must have Rome and the empire at his feet. If, however, they could not escape from subjection to a single ruler, the nobles were anxious to have an easy and quiet man, who would interfere little with them, and even pretend to put himself under their protection. Among the great families already scathed by proscriptions, there was at this time but one peculiarly eminent which was not connected with the hated house of the Claudii and the Julii. The Pisos had long borne themselves as rivals of the emperors: a Cnæus Piso, as we have seen, had fancied himself the equal of Tiberius; and the pride with which another had threatened to withdraw from public life, showed that he could not brook to act as

Growing discontent of the nobility.

a subordinate. Even after the death of Cnæus, and the disgrace of his house, his sons and grandsons had continued to hold their rank among the Roman nobility. One of the first caprices of Caligula was his attempt to degrade the head of the Calpurnii, by taking from him his wife, and afterwards by banishing him.[1] But this man, C. Calpurnius Piso, was restored to favour by Claudius, in compliment to the senate; he was moreover elevated to the consulship. The eloquence of the speech with which he repaid this indulgence has been especially commemorated in the verses of a client or parasite.[2] His abilities, his riches, his liberality are all equally extolled by the same panegyrist; but they are sufficiently confirmed by the sincerer testimony of an historian and a satirist.[3] Piso, however, was not a man of action, and in the absence of higher aims in life he became celebrated for his skill in the mock campaigns of chess or draughts. His mild temper was not agitated, perhaps, by the illusions of political ambition; but he disdained to yield precedence to any other, and held aloof, as far as possible, from public life till tempted in an unwary moment with the offer of preeminence.

They form a conspiracy and place Piso at its head.

Around this central figure, itself of no great mark or hopefulness, were soon grouped a number of lesser men, senators, knights, and military officers, intent upon transferring the empire to him from the last descendant of the Julii. Women were also admitted to the con-

The conspirators, and their plans for the assassination of the emperor.

[1] C. Calpurnius Piso was banished for taking back his wife, after the emperor had dismissed her. Caligula had probably a political motive in this outrageous tyranny. He wanted to bring the rival family to an end.

[2] See the *Carmen ad Pison.* 68. This poem is ascribed by Wernsdorf to Saleius Bassus, the "tenuis Saleius" of Juvenal: it is certainly not Lucan's.

[3] Tac. *Ann.* xv. 48. Juvenal, v. 108.: "Quæ Piso bonus, quæ Cotta solebat Largiri." The scholiast on this passage confirms, with

spiracy. Fenius Rufus, the colleague of Tigellinus in command of the prætorians, was impelled to join it by hatred towards the rival who had eclipsed him in his chief's regards. His position, if not his personal qualities, gave him the foremost place in the whole band. Another of the conspirators, a man of more vehemence than vigour, was the youthful poet M. Annæus Lucanus, who, in the better years of Nero's career, had been his associate and a rival in versification, and is supposed to have suffered slights from the imperial jealousy.[1] Dion has specified Seneca, Lucan's uncle, as also an accomplice.[2] The tribune of a prætorian cohort, named Subrius Flavus, claimed the honour of assassinating the emperor with his own hand. He proposed to attack him openly while singing on the stage, and again, in the confusion of the conflagration of Rome, to waylay him among the passages of his burning palace.[3] He seems, however, to have been a man of no real determination, and to have shrunk in either case from

some additions, the account of Suetonius, *Calig.* 25. He mentions also Piso's fame, "in ludo latrunculorum," by which he is identified with the subject of the panegyric.

[1] The statement in the anonymous life of Lucan (ex comment. antiquissimo), that he gained the prize from the emperor at the Quinquennia, is contrary to the text of the genuine biography of Nero. See Suet. *Ner.* 12, 21. The short fragment upon Lucan ascribed to Suetonius affirms, with more probability, that he provoked his patron by some indiscretions, and, having lost his favour, proceeded first to libel and afterwards to conspire against him. But that Nero was jealous of his talent and forbade him to exhibit it in public, is distinctly asserted by Tacitus, *Ann.* xv. 49.: "Lucanum propriæ causæ accendebant quod famam carminum ejus premebat Nero, prohibueratque ostentare vanus assimilatione."

[2] Dion, lxii. 24. If not actually engaged in the plot we may infer, I think, from Tacitus that he was aware of it. The sentiment ascribed to him by Dion, that the assassination was necessary to free Rome from Nero and *to free Nero from himself*, savours of Seneca's rhetoric.

[3] Tac. *Ann.* xv. 50. This statement, dropped negligently by the historian, shows, if true, that the conspiracy had been long in agitation.

the personal hazard. It was next proposed to strike the blow when the emperor was at a private villa of Piso's: again Piso refused to violate the laws of hospitality, a piece of sentiment which in such a matter can hardly command our respect. Some indeed surmised that in fact he feared to leave the capital open to a possible rival, or even to the senate and the partisans, if such there were, of a republic.[1] But indecision reigned on all sides among the conspirators. Their behaviour was as frivolous as the motives generally attributed to them were personal and selfish. One indeed among them, a freedwoman named Epicharis (but why a woman among them at all? why a Grecian freedwoman?), seems to have acted with more sense and spirit than any of the men. Not only did she embrace their plans with ardour, and nerve their courage to the utmost, but while they were concerting imprudent schemes, and again lightly relinquishing them, she alone undertook to gain the fleet at Misenum, which protected the corn fleets of Alexandria, and held the existence of Rome in its hands. Possibly she, too, was more energetic than discreet. Her secret was betrayed by an officer named Volusius, whom she had engaged in the scheme; but she alone was arrested. The names of her confederates she had concealed from her betrayer, and while she was still retained in custody and fruitlessly interrogated, the conspirators, trusting to her fortitude and fidelity, continued to meet and deliberate. At last they fixed the nineteenth of April, the day of the Circensian games, for executing their enterprise. A senator named Scævinus demanded the honour of striking the blow, and for this purpose abstracted a votive dagger from

[1] The apprehended rival was L. Junius Torquatus Silanus, the son of M. Silanus (pecus aurea) cons A.D. 46, poisoned by Agrippina. See above, c. lii. Lucius was atnepos, or great-great-great-grandson, of Augustus.

a temple of Salus or of Fortune.[1] It was arranged that he should make the attack with the support of a chosen party in the senate, while Plautius Lateranus was prostrating himself before the emperor, and clinging to his limbs or throwing him down. Piso himself was to await the result in the adjacent temple of Ceres, whence Fenius was to fetch him to the camp, and present him, together with Antonia, the daughter of Claudius, to the soldiers. It was still deemed expedient to conciliate the soldiery by the presence of a representative of Germanicus. Such, at least, was the account given by Pliny, though Tacitus hesitates to believe it, from the known attachment of Piso to his wife, and the improbability of Antonia embracing a scheme from which, except by marriage with Piso, she could reap no personal advantage.[2] There seems, however, little force in the objection, while in the abiding sense it implies of military devotion there is something both natural and touching.

Conviction and execution of the conspirators.

And here the historian remarks on the fidelity with which the secret was kept among confederates of different rank, age, and sex. The plot seems to have been in agitation for nearly a year, and even the indiscretion of Epicharis,

[1] I would willingly conjecture that there was some connexion between this Scævinus and the Scæva whom Lucan so delights to honour. Comp. *Phars.* vi. 256.:

"Exornantque Deos ac nudum pectore Martem
Armis Scæva tuis: felix hoc nomine famæ," &c.

The last lines the poet penned contain a thrilling reminiscence of this true Roman hero, Cæsarean though he was:

"Scævam perpetuæ meritum jam nomina famæ
Ad campos, Epidamne, tuos, ubi solus apertis
Obsedit muris calcantem mœnia Magnum." x. extr.

We might imagine him only holding his hand, till Scævinus should strike down the last of the Julii, to complete the passage with a sentiment like that of the verse I have before quoted:

"Vivat, et ut Bruti procumbat victima, regnet."

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xv. 53.

if we may believe our accounts, seems not to have materially endangered it. But the bold and eager Scævinus at last unwittingly betrayed it. The day before the attempt was to be made, after holding a long conversation with one of the party, he was observed to seal his will, then taking his dagger from its sheath, and trying its edge, he gave it to a freedman, named Milichus, to sharpen. He then lay down to a supper of more than usual profusion, and gave freedom to the most esteemed of his slaves. At the same time his manner was that of a man labouring under anxiety, which he tried in vain to disguise by the assumption of excessive hilarity. Finally he charged Milichus to prepare bandages and fomentations for the cure of wounds. These circumstances awakened suspicion, if indeed Milichus was not actually admitted to the secret. At all events the wretch, *whose servile nature had not been eradicated by freedom*, was tempted to reveal his suspicions by hopes of a splendid reward.[1] The first of the conspirators who were arrested at his indication, and threatened with the question, made ample disclosures. Hopes of pardon induced them to denounce one another, together with some perhaps who were innocent; and Lucan, in particular, is charged with thus revealing the name of his own mother. Such charges, it must be remembered, are commonly made by unscrupulous governments to disgrace a commiserated victim. But the sufferings of a freedwoman would excite little sympathy, and Epicharis alone, it was admitted, from the weakness of whose sex greater infirmity might be expected, refused to betray the men who had trusted her. When, after being lacerated on the rack, she was brought a second time before her judges, bound to the chair, in which she could not sit unsupported,

Constancy of Epicharis.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 56, 57.

she contrived to strangle herself with the thongs, and died without a confession. Of all the conspirators, Fenius Rufus was the one whose fate deserved the least pity. As prefect of the guards, he contrived adroitly to place himself on the tribunal by the side of Tigellinus, and sought to screen himself from inquiry by the violence with which he judged his own associates. Denounced at last by one of the victims, he turned pale, stammered, and was unable to defend himself.[1] The accused were speedily convicted. Doomed without mercy by this domestic inquisition, they were allowed only to choose their mode of death, an indulgence which spared the government the odium of a public sentence. When escape was impossible, the culprits suffered with the callous fortitude which had become habitual with their class under the terrors of the imperial tyranny. If they deigned to flatter the prince with their last breath, it was for the sake of their children. Lucan died with a firmness which, while he still hoped for pardon, is said to have failed him; and, when his veins were opened in the bath, found consolation in reciting some of his own verses, descriptive of a monstrous death by bleeding at every pore.[2] Perhaps his conscience would not suffer him to utter at such a moment those denunciations of a tyranny he had so often flattered, or that praise of constancy he had failed to exhibit, with which so much of his poetry glows. *Swords*, he had once exclaimed, *were given men that they might never be slaves.* Again, *He is happiest who is content to die, next happiest he who*

Treachery of Fenius Rufus.

Death of Lucan.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 66.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 70. The lines were probably those of *Phars.* ix. 811. foll.:

"Sanguis erant lachrymæ; quæcunque foramina novit
Humor, ab his largus manat cruor; ora redundant,
Et patulæ nares; sudor rubet; omnia plenis
Membra fluunt venis: totum est pro vulnere corpus."

is compelled.[1] Among the first on whom sentence was pronounced was the unfortunate Seneca, who had in vain withdrawn himself from public affairs, in vain relinquished to the emperor the riches he supposed him to covet. He had long lived in expectation of this catastrophe, and Nero had striven to reassure him by a show of confidence and regard. Nero might indeed be indifferent to his ancient friend; but he had no reason to bear him malice. It was to Poppæa more probably that he owed his doom, for she was not likely to forgive the zeal with which he had dissuaded her lover from repudiating Octavia, and she felt her own influence to depend on removing from Nero's sight even the shadow of honour and virtue. It is some consolation to be assured that his end was composed and dignified.[2] He caused his veins to be opened in the presence of his friends and kindred, and continued calmly to converse with them through the protracted agony of a death, which his age and the sluggishness of his blood rendered peculiarly painful.[3]

Death of Seneca.

The threats of some, and even the calmness of his other victims redoubled Nero's alarm. They seemed equally to rely on speedy vengeance, to point to unseen avengers. Roused to wild fury by the necessities of self-defence,

Further prosecutions, and base adulation of the senate.

[1] Comp. iv. 575.: "Ignoratque datos ne quisquam serviat enses." x. 211.: "Scire mori sors prima viris, sed proxima cogi."

[2] We may hope that there is no truth in the story introduced by Dion, that Seneca urged his wife Paulina to die with him, to show how successful his lessons had been in teaching her to despise death. She let him open her veins, we are told, but on his dying first, caused them to be bound up again. Dion, lxii. 25.: comp. Tac. *Ann.* xv. 64.

[3] This mode of bleeding to death seems to have been so commonly adopted from an idea that it was comparatively painless. I have heard that a high medical authority has pronounced it to be much the reverse, at least when the circulation is languid. In such cases the Romans were wont to accelerate the flow of blood with the warm bath: Seneca, in his impatience, allowed himself to be stifled with the steam.

he extended his blows from the actual conspirators to many more whom he feared and suspected, and his thirst for their blood was stimulated by the glittering prospect of rich estates. The property of men who had been suffered to die by their own hand could not legally be confiscated, and to seize it, sentence of banishment must issue against their heirs, or they must be removed by assassination. Nero invoked the skill of the poisoners. The courage of the miserable nobles quailed completely before the arrow which flies in darkness. For every execution, for every murder, vows and sacrifices were offered in the Capitol. Parents thanked the gods for the loss of their children, sons for the loss of their fathers: the palace doors were hung with garlands by the relations of those over whom the prince was declared to have *justly triumphed.* Nero himself was not unmindful of the informers whose treachery had saved him. Milichus, besides rewards in money, received the title of Preserver. The soldiers were enriched with a donative; the populace were gratified with two thousand sesterces each, and an ample largess of corn. Tigellinus and Nerva, who had conducted the inquiry, were honoured with triumphal statues.[1] Nevertheless Nero seems to have faintly excused his severity and declared in an harangue to the senate, that he was urged by no private feelings, but only by the necessity of his position and the demands of the public safety. This sufficed to open the floodgates of patrician flattery. The most shameless decrees followed in his honour: thanks and offerings to the gods were, as usual, precipitately voted, and the day of his escape was recommended to perpetual commemoration. The proposal of Anicius Cerialis

[1] This Nerva is supposed to have been son to the jurist who has been mentioned as intimate with Tiberius. He is not to be confounded with the future emperor of the same name, of whom he may have been the father.

to erect him a temple forthwith, was only put timidly aside on the pretence that it might seem to anticipate his death; for it was only after death, according to established usage, that the emperor could be pronounced immortal.[1]

Lucan's early compliments to Nero.

But already, not long before the era at which we are now arrived, the living Nero had enjoyed a poetical apotheosis. Lucan had expressed, in the fervour of his youthful intimacy with the most accomplished of princes, the sentiment common to many dreamers of the day, that the age of conflicts and disasters through which the state had passed was requited by the advent of a Nero to power. This was a compensation for Pharsalia and Munda, for Perusia and Philippi. The ruin of cities, the desolation of fields, the destruction of teeming populations, all were repaid by the prosperity which this child of fortune was to inaugurate. Even the gods of Olympus, it was declared, could not enjoy their ever-blessed sovereignty till they had conquered peace by the overthrow of the giants.[2] There is more,

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xv. 74. Modern historians have followed one another in asserting that divine honours were paid by Rome to the living Nero. This passage, to which they alone blindly refer, proves precisely the reverse. "Reperio in commentariis senatus Cerialem Anicium, consulem designatum, pro sententia dixisse, ut templum D. Neroni quam maturrime publica pecunia poneretur. Quod quidem ille *decernebat* (proposed), tanquam mortale fastigium egresso . . . . . ." The remainder of the sentence is corrupt, but the context implies that the proposal was rejected. Setting aside the momentary freaks of Caligula, no Roman emperor, at least for the first two centuries, allowed himself to be worshipped by the citizens; "Jurabit Roma *per umbras*," was the worst in this respect that republican indignation could say of them.

[2] Lucan, *Phars.* i. 37.:

"Jam nihil, O superi, querimur; scelera ipsa nefasque
Hac mercede placent," &c.

It was not till a later period that Nero affected to close the temple of Janus, "tanquam nullo residuo bello;" the true reading apparently of Suet. *Ner.* 13.: but anticipations of a golden age of peace

I believe, in this encomium than merely extravagant flattery. Setting aside the vaunted merits of the prince himself, in which none but juvenile triflers should have seen much to admire, the age seems to have been impressed with signs which to more thoughtful men betokened extraordinary felicity. A blaze of luxury dazzled all eyes. The profusion of the higher classes was taken for a proof of their wealth; but wealthy they undoubtedly were beyond all former experience. The rapidity with which fortunes were made, as it were underground, by the ministers of the imperial government, even by freedmen and slaves, urged men to projects and speculations, to secret investments, and distant enterprises. It would appear that the great and ancient families, which had escaped the proscriptions of recent tyrants, had removed the sources of their abundance from the observation of the central government; and the riches they displayed in the capital might seem to have dropped from the clouds, or sprung from the bosom of the soil. Presently the public was amazed to learn that one-half of the province of Africa was held in fee by six noble families of Rome. Such is the statement of a contemporary, and no doubt that statement was believed.[1] The existence of these vast appropriations, indeed, was only made known by their confiscation. But when the emperor's eyes were once directed to that land of fabled riches, the seat of the famous garden of the Hesperides, it was easy to palm fictions upon

Popular anticipation of an age of extraordinary felicity.

to follow when he should be translated to divine power in the skies were already popular:

"Tum genus humanum positis sibi consulat armis,
Inque vicem gens omnis amet: pax missa per orbem
Ferrea belligeri compescat limina Jani."

[1] Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xviii. 7. 3. Speaking of the pernicious extent of private domains in Italy and the provinces: "Sex domini semissem Africæ possidebant, quum interfecit eos Nero princeps."

him, which should exceed the glowing realities of the fortune he enjoyed. A strange story is told of a brainless projector, a man of Punic origin, named Cesellius Bassus, who was persuaded, apparently by a dream, that a hoard of gold, in bars and ingots, was to be found in a cave on his own land, which he presumed to be the deposit of Dido, queen of Carthage.[1] He crossed the sea, and hastened to acquaint the prince of the treasure-trove, which by law accrued to the fiscus. Access to Nero, even on such an errand, could only be obtained by money, and Bassus purchased at a handsome price admittance for his glittering tale. For its truth indeed he had no evidence to offer, nor, it seems, was any demanded. The spendthrift's hopes were unclouded by misgivings. He allowed the story to be circulated through Rome, and regaled his ears, while his preparations were in progress, with the flattery of his courtiers, who continued to inflame his expectations. At the same moment the Quinquennial games were in course of celebration, and the circumstance was seized by the poets and declaimers to dilate on the prince's fortune, for whom the soil bore not her accustomed fruits only, nor her precious metals alloyed with dross and earth, but the pure ore itself, already refined for use. Fired with these glowing benedictions, he plunged into deeper prodigality than ever. He became reckless in the profusion of treasures which he believed to be unlimited; the treasury was speedily exhausted in the anticipation of unbounded replenishment. But the officers sent under the guidance of Bassus to recover the hoards he had indicated, spent their time in exploring and digging to no purpose. The people and the soldiers of the province turned out in crowds to witness the search and to

Pretended discovery of the treasures of Dido.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 1.: "Lateres (ingots) prægraves jacere, adstantibus parte alia columnis" (bars).

protect it. After examining, spade in hand, every corner of the wretched man's estate, with more patience than his crazy tale deserved, they were obliged at last to report the total disappointment of their hopes; and he either put himself to death in despair, or, according to another account, was sent in chains to Rome to answer for his folly or his crime.[1]

Nero's performance in the theatre.

What remains of the year 818, the most fertile perhaps in all our annals in marked contrasts of the horrid and ludicrous, of public and private sufferings, of barbarous cruelty and frantic resistance, shall be told nearly in the words of Tacitus himself. *The senate*, the historian says, *on the return of the Neronian* (*Quinquennial*) *games, anxious to avert a public scandal, offered the emperor the prize for song and crown of eloquence, without the show of a contest. But Nero, protesting that he required no favour, insisted on being pitted against his rivals, and earning his honours by the sworn award of the judges. First, he simply recites a poem on the stage; then, implored by the populace to exhibit all his accomplishments, he plays and dances before them, observing in every particular the rules prescribed to the performers, who must not sit down to rest themselves, nor wipe their brows with a handkerchief. Finally, bowing the knee, and making a professional salute, he awaited the judges' decision with a show of bashful apprehension.*[2] *And the populace too, wont to follow*

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 1—3. A.U. 818, A.D. 65. It was even affirmed by some that the culprit was contemptuously released.

[2] Nero's vocal and musical powers are thus described in the dialogue which bears his name included in the works of Lucian. "His voice is unnaturally deep and hollow (comp. Lucan's jest, "Sub terris tonuisse putes"), and seems to buzz in his throat with a disagreeable sound, which, however, he mitigates by modulating it carefully to music. His skill as a singer is not contemptible, except inasmuch as it is contemptible in an emperor to attend to such things

every movement of the actor with voice and gesture, cheered throughout in concert. They seemed to be really delighted; and so perhaps they were, so reckless were they of the national dishonour. But the spectators from remoter burghs of Italy, still retaining some antique notions, those too from the provinces who were strangers to the abandoned habits of the city, were ashamed and affronted; and these, when they refused to clap their hands, and even hindered the hired applauders, were beaten by the soldiers posted among the seats. Many knights were trodden down in trying to make their way out: others were seriously injured by keeping their places a day and a night without intermission, fearing to be denounced if they absented themselves for a moment, by spies set to watch every movement even of their countenances. Of the poorer sort, indeed, many were punished on this account on the spot: against the nobler the ill-will of the emperor was treasured for future manifestation.[1]

After the conclusion of the games died Poppæa, from the chance violence of her husband, who kicked her when in a state of pregnancy: for I cannot believe in the story of poison, though asserted by some writers, from mere hatred, as I believe, to Nero; for he was anxious for children, and greatly enamoured of his wife. Her body was not consumed by fire, as is the Roman custom; but embalmed after the

Death of Poppæa. Divine honours paid to her.

at all. But when he enacts the part of the Gods, how ludicrous he is! yawn the hearers must, in spite of a thousand perils. For he nods, drawing a long breath, squares his toes, raises himself to the utmost, and bends back like a man bound to the wheel. Naturally of a sanguine complexion, his visage now glows with a deeper red." Then follows the story of a tragedian, who persisted in contending for the prize against him, with great applause from the audience, but much to Nero's mortification, who set on some of the players to attack him and beat him to death.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 4, 5.

manner of foreign kings, and thus introduced into the sepulchre of the Julii. The obsequies, however, were publicly solemnized, and Nero himself pronounced her eulogy from the rostrum, praising her beauty, declaring that she was the mother of a divine infant, (a daughter she had lately borne him, already dead,) *and representing her other gifts of fortune in the light of personal merits.*[1]

Proscription of C. Cassius and L. Silanus.

The death of Poppæa, much mourned in public, not less blest in secret from the sense of her shamelessness and cruelty, was the more bitterly considered from Nero's forbidding C. Cassius to appear at her funeral. This was the first sign of the coming evil, which was not long delayed. Silanus was included in the same proscription; with no charge against either, except that Cassius was eminent for ancestral wealth and high consideration, Silanus for illus-

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 6.; Suet. *Ner.* 35.; Dion, lxii. 27. Our author does not mention, though he afterwards alludes to the fact as if mentioned, that the senate decreed divine honours to Poppæa. Embalming, after the fashion of the Egyptians and the Greek sovereigns in the East, from a symbol of immortality easily slid into a symbol of divinity. Pliny has a remarkable statement, that the amount of spices consumed at Poppæa's funeral exceeded a whole year's produce of Arabia (xii. 41.). This would naturally be understood to refer to the burning of her body, and the critics are perplexed at the apparent discrepancy between the two authors, nor do I think they are successful in reconciling them. I fear it must be considered one of the blunders which Pliny, in his haste and indiscriminate appetite for miscellaneous information, has too often committed. With this memento before us we may allow some distrust of another statement also, that Poppæa was always followed by a troop of five hundred she-asses to provide her a bath of milk, as a cosmetic, daily. That her mules were shod with gold we may, if we please, admit. It should be observed that Dion's repetition of these stories is no confirmation of them. It is remarkable that Josephus (*Antiq. Jud.* xx. 7. 11.) calls this wretched creature "a devout woman," θεοσεβὴς γὰρ ἦν. Perhaps she patronized the Jewish freedmen connected with the palace; possibly she discountenanced the Christian converts. Josephus was, however, under some personal obligations to her. See Joseph. *Vit.* 3. On this point more will be said in another place.

trious birth and youthful modesty. Such were the crimes for which Nero sent a message to the senate, in which he insisted that they should both be removed from the commonwealth, *objecting to Cassius that among the images of his ancestors he venerated the bust of the tyrannicide inscribed the* Party-Leader. *This, he said, was to sow the seeds of a civil war, to urge a revolt against the family of the Cæsars. Moreover he had attached to himself Silanus, a restless and turbulent stripling, to lure the disaffected to rebellion. Silanus, he declared, had presumed already to promise posts and places: a charge as frivolous as false; for Silanus, thoroughly cowed by the death of his uncle Torquatus, was only anxious to secure his own safety. But further, the prince suborned delators to accuse Lepida, the wife of Cassius and aunt to Silanus, of incestuous intercourse with her nephew, and the practice of magical rites. Certain senators, Vulcatius and Marcellus, and a knight, Calpurnius Fabatus, were arrested as his accomplices; these men, however, got a respite by appealing to the prince, and eventually escaped, from their insignificance, among the greater criminals by whom Nero's attention was engaged. On Cassius and Silanus exile was pronounced by decree of the senate. Lepida was left to the emperor's judgment. Cassius was transported to Sardinia to die there of old age: Silanus was removed to Ostia to be sent to Naxus; but he was presently confined in Barium, a town of Apulia. While enduring there his undeserved misfortune with the fortitude of a philosopher, he was laid hands on by a centurion under orders to kill him. He declared himself well prepared to die, but he would not suffer a cut-throat to claim the honour of slaying him. Such, though unarmed, were his vigour and resolution that the centurion was obliged to call his men to hold him; yet he struggled against him with his*

bare hands till despatched at last with cut and thrust, as if in regular combat.[1]

Death of Lucius Vetus, his mother and daughter.

Nor less sudden was the destruction of Lucius Vetus, his mother-in-law Sextia, and his daughter Pollutia, objects of hatred to the prince because their mere existence seemed to reproach him with the slaughter of Rubellius Plautus, the son-in-law of Vetus.[2] *Nero first discovered his feelings on hearing the delation of Fortunatus, a freedman of Vetus, and of Claudius Demianus, a man whom Vetus, when proconsul of Asia, had cast into prison for his crimes. When the accused was informed of the kind of witnesses who were pitted against him, he quits Rome for his Formian villa. Soldiers are sent to surround and watch him at a distance. His daughter was with him, still brooding over the recollection of her husband's death, of the murder she had herself witnessed, of the severed head she had embraced. She preserved his blood-stained garments as a widow and a mourner, taking only meat and drink sufficient to sustain her alive. At her father's desire she now repairs to the emperor at Naples, and access being denied her, haunts his door to extort an audience, calling on him to hear the innocent, not to surrender to a freedman his own colleague in the consulship, sometimes with womanish lamentations, and again, casting off her sex, with threats and frantic violence, till the prince's obduracy moved the disgust of all beholders. Then at last she bids her father abandon hope, and bear what is beyond help. The trial, he hears, is impending, and a severe sentence prepared.*

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 7—9. This was the L. Junius Torquatus Silanus referred to in a preceding note.

[2] This L. Vetus is mentioned in *Ann.* xiv. 58. by the name of L. Antistius. He was consul with Nero in the first year of his reign, A.D. 55. He commanded afterwards in the Upper Germany, and proposed to connect the Rhine and Saone with a canal. *Ann.* xiii. 53. See above, ch. li.

Friends advised him to make Cæsar heir to the bulk of his property, and secure, perchance, the remainder for his grandchildren. But this counsel he rejected, and lest by a last act of base submission, he should disgrace a life which had bordered on independence, first divided his money and furniture among his slaves,—all but three couches retained for a triple bier;—then himself, his daughter, and his mother, together in one chamber, with the same steel severed one another's veins;—wrapped each, for decency, in a single blanket, they are laid hastily in the vapour-bath, each gazing on the others and praying to be the first to die, and leave the others dying yet still alive. And fortune maintained the proper order: the elders died first and last the latest born. They were tried after their burial: it was decreed that they should suffer after the manner of the ancients. *Nero pretended to forbid this severity, allowing them forsooth to die in private: such was the mockery superadded after they were dead and gone.*

Publius Gallus, a Roman knight, was interdicted fire and water, because he had been intimate with Fenius Rufus, and on no distant terms with Vetus. The freedman and accuser were rewarded for their pains with seats in the theatre among the tribune's attendants. And the month which followed April (called now Neronian) was changed from Maius to Claudius, while June assumed the name of Germanicus, because, as Cornelius Orfitus in proposing the change declared, the name of Junius had been rendered ominous by the deaths of two guilty Torquati.

Name of the month Maius changed to Claudius, and Junius to Germanicus.

This year, disgraced by so many deeds of horror, was further distinguished by the Gods with storms and sicknesses. Campania was devastated by a hurricane which overthrew buildings, trees, and the fruits of the soil in every direction, even to the gates of the city,

Campania and the neighbourhood of Rome ravaged by storms and pestilence.

within which a pestilence thinned all ranks of the population, with no atmospheric disturbance that the eye could trace. The houses were choked with dead, the roads with funerals: neither sex nor age escaped. Slaves and free men perished equally amidst the wailings of their wives and children, who were often hurried to the pyre by which they had sate in tears, and consumed together with them. The deaths of knights and senators, promiscuous as they were, deserved the less to be lamented, inasmuch as falling by the common lot of mortality they seemed to anticipate the prince's cruelty.[1]

Melancholy reflections of Tacitus on his task as an historian.

We have seen in these extracts a graphic representation of the mingled farce and tragedy which one man's wantonness, and the supineness of the million, allowed to be inflicted on the great Roman people; and the disaster with which it concludes, the visitation of a superior Providence, though in the actual amount of suffering far more terrible, is felt as a relief because at least it brought with it no stigma upon humanity. The thirty thousand victims who were registered in this single autumn in the temple of Libitina, may be compared with twice that number entered in the bills of mortality in the course of eighteen months in the great plague of London.[2] But Nero, who it seems had fled from the contagion to his Campanian watering-places, still continued to exercise the same

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 10—13. The account of this year concludes with a notice of the prince's liberality to the city of Lugdunum, to which he repaid a large sum it had formerly presented to Rome, on the occasion perhaps of the fire. Read with Ritter *urbis* for *turbidis* (casibus), and comp. xv. 45. "conferendis pecuniis pervastata Italia, provinciæ eversæ," &c.

[2] Comp. Suet. *Ner.* 39.: "Pestilentia unius auctumni quo triginta millia ad rationem Libitinæ venerunt" It is needless to say that this statement affords no adequate ground for calculating, with Brotier and others, the population of Rome; but it is important as showing the care and method with which the register of deaths was kept.

cruelty as before, and the year 819 commenced with another iniquitous process, which destroyed two nobles, one of them a son of Ostorius Scapula, himself a soldier of reputation.[1] He was already afraid of his own officers, of the men of action, not of words, the men who swayed the affection of the legions to which his own person was unknown. Here Tacitus pauses for a moment as if overcome by the horror of his subject, and embodies in despairing language his distress at the prostration of his countrymen's energies, while he justifies the sad interest with which he still lingers over it. *Even*, he says, *were I relating foreign wars, and deaths endured for the republic, I should both fatigue myself and expect to fatigue my readers with the same unvaried tale of sad though not dishonourable ends. But now the servile patience of the sufferers, and the loss of so much blood at home, oppress the soul and overwhelm it with melancholy. Nor would I ask of those to whom these horrors shall become known any other indulgence for the wretches who perished so pusillanimously, but to refrain from detesting them. It was the wrath of the Gods against the Roman state; not such as, in the case of armies worsted or cities taken, may once be noted, and then passed over in silence. We owe it to the posterity of illustrious nobles to recount all their deaths separately, just as the obsequies of each are distinguished from the common herd of funerals.*[2] And so, with these bitter words, he returns again to his task, and proceeds with dogged endurance to record the names and fortunes of the sufferers of the years which followed. A chance which he did not anticipate, but which he would hardly have regretted, has abridged the story of these gloomy times, and

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 14, 15.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 16.: "Detur hoc illustrium virorum posteritati, ut quomodo exsequiis a promiscua sepultura separantur, ita in traditione supremorum accipiant habeantque propriam memoriam."

confined the remaining pages of our author's annals to little more than a single subject, to which we, too, must follow him with respect and sympathy.

Death of Annæus Mela, father of Lucan.

Before, however, we proceed to the crowning enormity of the death of Thrasea, another proscription must be noticed, partly as involving one name at least of historical notoriety, partly as illustrating the horrors under which the Roman nobles at this time lived and perished. Annæus Mela, Rufius Crispinus, Anicius Cerialis, and C. Petronius were involved in the same fate almost at the same moment. Crispinus, it seems, was a public character; he had been prefect of the prætorians and worn the consular ornaments; such being the case he became an object of jealousy to aspiring courtiers, and liable to false accusation. Charged accordingly with participation in some recent conspiracy, probably that of Piso, he had been banished to Sardinia, where he soon put an end to his own life. But Mela had preferred a private station to the perils of a more conspicuous career.[1] This man was the brother of Gallio and Seneca, and seems to have partaken of the Epicurean indifference of the one, together with the

[1] I have mentioned the three sons of M. Annæus Seneca the rhetorician in chapter xli.: "docti Senecæ ter numeranda domus." Mart. iv. 40. Of these Novatus took the name of Gallio after adoption by M. Junius Gallio. He is generally supposed to be the Gallio mentioned in *Acts* xviii. 12. as proconsul of Achaia under Claudius. His mildness of character ("caring for none of these things") is referred to by Statius (*Sylv.* ii. 7. 32.): "dulcem generasse Gallionem;" and by Seneca (*Nat. Qu.* præf. iv.): "quem nemo non parum amat, etiam qui amare plus non potest;" the false brilliancy of his style by Tacitus (*de Orat.* 26.): "tinnitus Gallionis." The brothers seem to have been all addicted to letters. I know not why M. Nisard, in his *Etudes sur les Poètes Latins* (i. 89.), in advancing his theory that the Tragedies which go under the name of Seneca were written by different members of the family (Senecanum opus, he calls them), excludes Gallio from the partnership. M. Nisard cannot inform us how the authorship of the several plays is to be distributed, except that he gives the *Octavia*, as the worst, decidedly to Lucan. I think myself that there is strong evidence of L. Seneca being author of some at least of them.

love of money which casts a stigma on the other. Not seeking to rise above the rank of knighthood, he had amassed wealth for himself while replenishing the imperial fiscus in the provinces. He was father, however, to Lucan, a relation which, however honourable, exposed him to danger and led ultimately to his ruin. After his son's death he had shown, it is said, peculiar keenness in collecting the debts due to him, and in so doing had offended a certain Fabius Rusticus, who charged him in revenge with complicity in the crime. His wealth insured his condemnation. Forged letters were produced, a case of Majestas was vamped up, and Mela, after bequeathing a large part of his estates to Tigellinus, in hope of preserving the remnant for his heirs, shrank from the anxiety of a trial by opening his own veins. But to his last will he had appended a word of complaint at being thus compelled to die in his innocence, while Crispinus and Cerialis, the prince's real enemies, were allowed to survive him. The first indeed, as we have seen, had already destroyed himself; the other, on finding his own life menaced, speedily took the same course. Petronius, who was sacrificed to the jealousy of Tigellinus, seems to have been a man of more remarkable character than any of these. His sentiments and habits were those of a Mæcenas transferred to a corrupter age, and confined to a lower sphere. He had governed Bithynia, and become subsequently consul; and in these high offices he had shown, like his trusty prototype, activity and vigilance. But when released from public trammels, choice and policy combined to dispose him to the enjoyment of ease and luxury in a private station: his days were passed in slumber, his nights devoted to genial dissipation. If he still occupied a large space in the eyes of the citizens, it was owing to his refined taste, to the exquisiteness of his luxury, and the elegance of his debauches; and

Character and death of Petronius.

all he said and did was repeated with admiration of its studied ease, or, to borrow a phrase of his own, its *curious felicity*. Petronius was admitted, with the choicest profligates of the day, to the prince's intimacy, and stood so high in his confidence as to be entitled the Arbiter of the Imperial Pleasures. Nothing was grateful, nothing was admired in luxury, but what had the stamp of his approbation. But here he invaded the province coveted by Tigellinus. Two favourites could not sit so near the throne together. Tigellinus proved the craftier; he accused his rival of a guilty intimacy with the traitor Scævinus, and having suborned a slave to depose against him, deprived him by an adroit manœuvre of the means of defence. Nero was at the time in Campania, and Petronius was seized on his way to visit him, and detained far from all assistance at Cumæ. We hear no more in this age of the judicial contests of the delators under Tiberius. Accusers had not now the opportunity of making themselves famous for their oratory. Their hateful trade was no longer gilded even by the false glory of eloquence. Petronius, like so many others, resolved at once to anticipate trial and sentence by suicide. The manner indeed in which he proceeded to yield his life was singular. Summoning his friends to his presence, he opened his veins in the course of their conversation, bound them, and opened them again, as its interest warmed or languished. But their talk was not of matters of philosophy or the question of the soul's immortality; they only recited trifling compositions, and improvised verses. To some of his slaves he made presents, others he caused to be punished. He lay down to supper; composed himself to sleep, and sought to give his death the appearance, and if possible the sensations, of a natural end. In his will he refused to follow the mode of flattering the emperor or his creatures, and filled a

codicil with the indignant recital of their enormities. He signed and sealed, and transmitted the document to the tyrant. Finally, he broke his signet, that it might never again be used to bring the guiltless into peril; and dashed in pieces a costly murrhine vase, to deprive Nero of the relic which he knew him most ardently to covet.[1]

Our sole relief in tracing the bloody records of the Neronian tryanny is the reflection that its victims, ill-used as they were, were seldom worthy of a happier fate; in most at least of the cases we have noticed, they were among the basest, the most abandoned, and, when occasion offered, the most barbarous of their countrymen. We may presume that the indifference with which citizens, provincials, and slaves witnessed the massacre of their chiefs, their patrons, their masters, was derived from a strong sense of the iniquity of their career, their crimes and vices. We pay the tribute of a sigh to the fate of Britannicus

[1] Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxxvii. 7. As regards the authorship of the *Satiricon*, which goes under the name of Petronius Arbiter, the reader may refer to the elaborate arguments of Studer in the *Rheinisches Museum*, 1843. This writer maintains the old view. He collects allusions to the age of Nero, and the early emperors: as 1. in the reflections on the decline of eloquence, c. 1. (comp. the *Dial. de Orat.* c. 35.; 2. on the wealth and manners of freedmen (comp. Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxxiii. 11., Senec. *Epist.* 27); 3. on Orbitas (comp. Senec. *ad Marc.* 19. and alib., Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 52.); 4. in the names Mæcenatianus, Apelles, Menecrates (comp. Suet. *Calig.* 32., *Ner.* 30.); 5. in the estimate of Lucan as a poet; 6. in the verses on the civil wars; 7. in the reference to an invention for working glass with the hammer (comp. Plin. xxxvi. 26., Dion, lvii. 21.); 8. in the mention of the Vinum Opimianum and the Horti Pompeiani; 9. in the reference to the substitution of mosaic work for painting, c. 83. (comp. Plin. xxxv. 1.); 10. to the new fashion of anointing the feet, c. 70., introduced, according to Pliny, xiii. 3., under Nero. He further shows that the arguments of Niebuhr and others for placing the work later, *i.e.* in the time of the Antonines, the Severi, or even Constantine, are of no value, and, on the whole, leaves me tolerably confident that it belongs to the age of Nero, and was composed by Petronius, the "Arbiter elegantiarum" of that emperor.

and Octavia, innocent as they yet were in the first bloom of youth; but we confess that they too, had they been suffered to live a few years longer, would probably have lived to deserve all their sorrows. But the crowning crime of Nero was of a different stamp; for its victims were men of acknowledged honour and probity. *Nero at last*, says Tacitus, *yearned to destroy Virtue itself, in the persons of Pætus Thrasea and Barea Soranus.*

Pætus Thrasea and Barea Soranus.

These two illustrious names have been thus joined together by Tacitus, and the connexion shall not be severed, though it does not appear that there was any alliance in blood or friendship between them, nor were they in fact involved in a common proscription. They were united in the protest of their noble lives against the iniquity of the times. Soranus had been proconsul in Asia, and had shown unusual consideration for the claims of the subject provincials. But besides being rebuked by his superior goodness, Nero had special grounds of mortification against him. He had refused to punish a city which had defended the statues of its gods against the commissioner sent by Nero to plunder it. He was marked for accusation by a needy delator. He was charged with intimacy with the culprit Rubellius Plautus, and with treasonable intrigues in his province. Against Thrasea the charges were still more vague than these. This man was eminent among the Stoics, the sect then most in vogue among the Roman nobility; and even the stern thoughtful air and sober garb which became his profession, were felt as a reproach to the frivolous dissipation of the prince and his flatterers.[1] His household was regulated with antique simplicity: his wife, the child of the heroic Arria, was wise and patient; his son-in-law, Helvidius Priscus, was brave

[1] Suet. *Ner.* 37.: "Thraseæ objectum est tristior et pædagogi vultus."

and generous; he was admired by the gentle Persius, a philosopher without conceit, and a satirist without gall.[1] All his public acts, for he was a senator and had held high office, were remarked by the bad with mortification, by the good with undisguised triumph. When the cruel motion was made in the senate against the memory of Agrippina, Thrasea had retired without giving his vote: in the Neronian games, when so many nobles had disgraced themselves by unworthy compliances, Thrasea had stiffly declined; an offence the more pointed because in the Antenorian games at his own city Patavium, he had relaxed, as a Greek among Greeks, and taken part in the acting and singing.[2] He had interfered to moderate the fierce flattery of the senate, when it would have put Antistius to death for raillery against the emperor. Again, when divine honours were decreed to Poppæa, he had abstained from attending her obsequies.[3] Capito Cossutianus, the son-in-law of Tigellinus, kept a note of all these delinquencies, *partly from his own vicious hatred of virtue*, but still more, perhaps, for the effectual aid Thrasea had lent to certain envoys from Cilicia, who had been sent to Rome to charge him with oppression in their province.

Frivolous charges against Thrasea.

Nor was this all: the conduct of the stern republican had been marked by still increasing symptoms of political disgust, which could not fail to be noticed. His admirers in the next generation related with a glow of satis-

[1] The scholiast on Persius informs us that the poet was kinsman to Arria. Rupert. in Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 34. It is conjectured that Thrasea belonged to the Gens Fannia.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 21.: "Parum expectabilem operam præbuerat:" "he had not done what was required of him." It has been explained elsewhere how the proud Roman of the city deigned to make himself a mere Greek in the holidays in the country.

[3] That divine honours were decreed to Poppæa, though not before stated by Tacitus, appears also from Dion, lxiii. 26. Her temple was dedicated by Nero, inscribed with the epigraph, "Sabinæ Deæ Veneri

faction how Thrasea and Helvidius were wont to pledge each other, crowned with festal chaplets, on the birthdays of Brutus and Cassius[1]; but whether this were so or not, the detractors of his own day remarked, with a shrug, that he had shunned making oath to the emperor at the commencement of the year; that though a quindecemvir, he had failed to offer vows for his safety; that he had never sacrificed for his health, or for the preservation of *his heavenly voice;* once a constant attendant in the senate house, he had for three years refrained from entering it; lately when the fathers had rushed to condemn Vetus and Silanus, he had pleaded clients' business to keep away. This, it was said, was secession from public life; this was faction; if many chose to do the same, it would be dissension, it would be civil war. In their proneness to party contentions, people, it was muttered, were beginning to talk forsooth of *Nero* and *Thrasea*, as formerly of Cæsar and Cato. *Followers he has*, it was added, *who affect his dress and manners, if not yet the perverseness of his opinions; and reflect on the genial laxity of the prince by their sourness and solemnity. By him alone the life of Cæsar, his accomplishments, his genius, are held in no honour. To believe Poppæa no goddess evinced the same evil spirit as to withhold approval from the acts of the divine Julius and the divine Augustus. The journals of the Senate were read in the provinces and the camps only to discover the motions which Thrasea refused to sanction. The sect to which he belonged had been*

matronæ fecerunt." Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* vi. 287., gives two coins inscribed on one side to "Diva Claudia," the infant daughter, on the other to "Diva Poppæa Augusta."

[1] Juvenal, v. 36.:

> "Quale coronati Thrasea Helvidiusque bibebant
> Brutorum et Cassî natalibus."

The respect in which Thrasea was held by later generations is strongly marked in the epistles of the younger Pliny. See vii. 19., viii. 22.

ever the patron of a faction; it had numbered a Tubero and a Favonius, names distasteful even to the republic. Such are the men who now set up the name of Liberty as a plea for overthrowing the empire: should they succeed in overthrowing it, they will soon attack liberty itself. . . . . . These insinuations easily inflamed the fury of Nero, and he encouraged Capito to proceed with his impeachment with the aid of another vehement delator, Eprius Marcellus.[1]

The reader will have remarked that hitherto the victims of Nero had almost all perished in private. Either he had made use of secret assassination, or threats alone had sufficed to drive his enemies to suicide in the recesses of their own houses. Slowly, and from confused and doubtful whisperings, had the people learnt for the most part the fate of Agrippina and Britannicus, of Octavia, Cassius, and Silanus. Such deeds were not exhibited in public, such records were not written in contemporary history. The sensibility of that excitable populace was little affected by mutterings of horrors removed actually from their sight, or softened to their imaginations by the lapse of time. This was no doubt the secret of Nero's policy, which enabled him to break all his pledges to justice and humanity, and gave impunity to crimes which posterity has so deservedly execrated. But in the cases now before us, the threats of the accusers seemed to be of no avail, and the emperor was prevailed on to consent, not without apprehension, to the course of a public prosecution. A moment was adroitly seized to carry through the process when attention was absorbed in a matter of casual interest. Tiridates, a claimant to the throne of Armenia, came to Rome to receive the diadem from the hand of the emperor. To dispose of foreign crowns was the pride

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 22.

of the senate and its chiefs, and here a rival potentate was stooping to receive the gift. Nero, with no conquests of his own to boast of, was eager to make a grand display of his dignity and power.[1] The citizens, with their increasing frivolity and love for shows and ceremonies, were gloating over the meeting of the prince and the king, when Thrasea and Soranus were both suddenly denounced. Thrasea desired an interview with the emperor; this being refused, he addressed him by letter, pledging himself to refute every accusation, and requiring only to be confronted with his accuser. Nero had eagerly seized the paper in which he hoped to read an avowal of guilt, accompanied with an abject submission. Disappointed in this anticipation, he resolved with mortified vanity to let the impeachment proceed, and summoned the senate to hear and pronounce upon it.

Thrasea discusses with his friends the course he should adopt.

On the circumstances of this illustrious sacrifice Tacitus dwells with peculiar solemnity. He sets before us, as in a discussion of the friends of Thrasea, the arguments which were doubtless often in the mouths of the sufferers of those days and their anxious associates, for defying the delator with a bold though hopeless defence, or for submitting in silence to the inevitable sentence. On the one hand, those who urged the accused to present himself in the senate-house declared their conviction that his constancy would not fail him; he would say nothing but what would en-

[1] Suetonius, *Ner.* 13., describes the ceremony. Nero wore triumphal robes, surrounded by troops, and the whole solemnity bore a military character. At the close the soldiers saluted him with the title of Imperator, and his laurels were offered to Jupiter in the Capitol. This presumed victory was followed by the closing of the temple of Janus. Comp. the medals on which the closing of Janus is recorded, as given by Eckhel, vi. 273, which must overrule the conflicting statement of Orosius, though professing to be taken from Tacitus, that Janus was never closed between Augustus and Vespasian. Oros. vii. 3.

hance his reputation. . . . . *Let the citizens behold him confronting the terrors of death: let the fathers hear his words, the words of a god rather than of a man: possibly even Nero himself might be moved by the eloquence of inspiration: at least, should he persist in his cruelty, posterity would distinguish this example of a worthy death from the cowardice of those who let themselves perish in silence.* . . . . On the other hand, some advised him to await the event in his own chamber. To his virtue and constancy they paid the same tribute as the first speakers; but they warned him of the insults he might have to undergo; the railing of his accusers might be followed by the revilings, and even the blows, of the servile crowd around them. . . . . *Let him relieve the senate from the infamy of such a crime; let him leave it undetermined what the fathers would venture to decree against Thrasea at their bar. That Nero would be made to blush there was no hope whatever: but defiance might goad him to further cruelties against his victim's children.* But the counsels of the anxious band were not solely confined to considerations of dignity or expediency. One at least among them, the young Arulenus Rusticus, offered at all risks to intercede, as tribune of the people, and exercise the ancient right of his office to quash the decree of the senate. He was only restrained by the mild prudence of Thrasea himself, who pronounced that now, on the threshold of a public career, it was his duty not to throw away his life to no purpose, but reserve it for the chance of future usefulness.[1]

Proceedings against him in the senate.

Every suggestion invited and affably considered, the sage withdrew to make his final determination in private. Meanwhile, the proceedings of his enemies were carried on impetu-

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 25, 26.

ously. The next morning two prætorian cohorts occupied the temple of Venus Genitrix, whither the senate was summoned. The approaches were thronged by bands of gowned citizens, sword in hand, while soldiers were posted in the forums and halls around; it was amidst the scowls and threats of these terrible bystanders that the fathers entered the Curia. A message from the emperor was delivered. It contained a general complaint against the senators for deserting their posts, and preferring the ease of their suburban pleasances to the fatigues of public duty. This was the theme on which the accusers spoke. Thrasea and Helvidius in the first instance, next to them Paconius Agrippinus and Curtius Montanus, as known objects of the prince's jealousy, were charged with this dereliction of their senatorial duties, ascribed to a contumacious and treasonable disgust towards the government. To Thrasea, it was asserted, the peace of the world, and the victories of the empire, were equally distasteful. The forums, the temples, the theatres, wherever, in short, the Roman people congregated most for duties or amusements, he shunned alike, as though they were solitudes uninhabitable to man. He had snapped the social bonds of rank and profession; he had abandoned the Roman commonwealth; let him die the death, and make the unholy divorce final and complete.

Charges against Soranus.

The declamation of Marcellus was loud and passionate; and the senate, terrified beyond its wont by the threatening sights around it, succumbed impotently to its fury. Nevertheless, so deep was the compassion for the blameless virtue of Thrasea, the gallant bravery of Helvidius, the guileless innocence of Agrippinus and Montanus, that when the harangue of the accuser ended, it still sate motionless and silent. Then uprose Sabinus to advance his charges against Soranus, and with the treasons he imputed to the father he combined a

charge of unholy divination against his young and widowed daughter. Servilia, such was the matron's name, admitted that she had consulted the sorcerers as to the fate impending on her sire; but she had conceived no imprecations on the prince; for his safety she had always prayed; in the ardour of her feminine devotion she had ever mentioned his name among the gods whom she invoked. Soranus avouched her innocence with passionate exclamations: with his acts, whatever their colour might be, he showed that she was in no way connected. But the charges against both were pressed with redoubled vehemence. Among the most conspicuous of the witnesses against Soranus was Egnatius, his client and the professed imitator of his conduct and opinions. The senate was moved with more than common disgust at the sight of a man who professed himself among the straitest of the Stoics, denouncing the noblest model of his own sect.[1]

The accusers, however, were completely successful. After a short pause, which gave room for one example of generous devotion in the person of Cassius Asclepiodotus, a foreigner, once the client and now the defender of Soranus, the senate decreed death, allowing only the choice of death to themselves, against Thrasea, Soranus, and Servilia. Helvidius and Paconius were to be banished from Italy. Montanus was only declared incapable of all public functions as a citizen. Marcellus and Cossutianus, on the other hand, were rewarded with largesses and honours. The whole day had been consumed in this double process. It was already evening when the quæstor of the consul arrived with the fatal intelligence before the door of Thrasea, who, it seems, had remained quietly at home, and was

Death of Thrasea.

[1] The crime of Egnatius furnished a standing example of unnatural perfidy to the satirists. "Stoicus occidit Baream, delator amicum." Juv. *Sat.* iii. 116.

entertaining a number of distinguished friends, both male and female. He was engaged more particularly in a discourse with the Cynic Demetrius, and from the solemnity of his gestures as well as from words which were overheard from him, it was supposed that the topic of their discussion was the nature of the soul and the independence of mind and body. Amidst the tears and groans of the company, to whom the message was quickly communicated, Thrasea contented himself with urging them not to incur danger on his behalf, and forbade his wife to follow the example of the elder Arria, bidding her live for the last solace and protection of their only daughter. Then going forth, he met the messenger of death, and received from his hands the decree of the senate. He rejoiced to find that Helvidius was spared. Taking the young man, together with Demetrius, into his chamber, he held out his arms to the operator, and dashing on the ground the first blood that started, *A libation*, he exclaimed, *to Jove the Deliverer! Look, young man*, he added, *and heaven avert the omen! but in the age to which you are born, it behoves men to confirm their own courage by beholding fortitude in others.*[1] And here,—with only the addition that his pains were long, and that he turned towards Demetrius,—the last sentence of the historian is suddenly interrupted: our manuscripts of this part of Tacitus have come to us from a single copy, and the chance which has torn off some few leaves, perhaps, from the end of a volume, has broken the thread of a narrative, so painfully interesting, so solemnly instructive. The interest is common to all mankind who can sympathize in the sorrows and virtues of the noblest of their species; the instruction is for those who can gather from these agonizing details the warnings or consolations they are fitted to impart.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xvi. ult.

In the following chapter we shall enter upon an examination of the state of thought and sentiment at Rome at this period, which may help us, perhaps, to unriddle some of the perplexing questions which have been opened but not solved for us in the narrative of the historians.

CHAPTER LIV.

Consideration of the causes which induced the Romans to endure the tyranny of the emperors.—Freedom of thought and education allowed by it accepted as a compensation for restraints on political action.—Toleration of philosophy.—Opposition of the Stoics to the government: their character and position in the commonwealth.—State of religion at Rome: suppression of the Gaulish superstitions: encroachment of Oriental cults.—Proscription of the Syrian and Egyptian priesthoods.—Judaism becomes fashionable at Rome: introduced among the freedmen of the palace.—Turbulence and proscription of the Jews at Rome.—First reception of Christian ideas among them.—St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans.—His arrival and preaching at Rome.—Persecution of the "Christians."—Question of the application of this name by Tacitus.—The tyranny of the emperors supported by the corruption of the age.—Reflections on Roman vice.—Counteracting principles of virtue.—Christianity accords with the moral tendencies of the age.—Seneca and Saint Paul.—The teaching of Seneca moral, not political.—Persius and Lucan.

Characteristics of the imperial tyranny.

THE tyranny of Nero, and with it the tyranny of the Roman emperors,—that tyranny which has been held up as a warning beacon to free men for so many hundred years,—has now reached its climax: with Thrasea not a virtuous man, but Virtue itself, in the affected phrase of Tacitus, may seem to have been proscribed. Surveyed from a great distance in time and place, and from our point of view, unfamiliar as we happily are with the circumstances attending them, such atrocities as those recorded in our latter chapters seem to border on the incredible. It is not so much the barbarity of the despot,—released from all fear of God and overwhelmed at the same time with the fear of man,—as the patience of the subjects, that moves our wonder, and appears at first sight among the most inscrutable problems of

history. Every Roman was armed, and the military force at the prince's hand was of the most trifling description; every Roman vaunted himself of the same ruling race as the prince; his equal in intelligence, in theory at least his equal before the law. The emperor of the Romans stood absolutely alone at the head of his people. He had no society of tyrants of his own class, like the slave-owner, to support him: he had no foreign allies, like an autocrat in modern Europe, to maintain his authority as a bulwark to their own. Yet the attempts against the life or power of the Cæsars have been, as far as we have seen, comparatively few. They have generally been the work of private enemies or domestic traitors: those which have been contrived by public men, and for public ends, whether successful or not, have conciliated no sympathy from the multitude. To throw any light on this phenomenon, for such it may deserve to be called, we must look more deeply into the circumstances of the times, and the moral condition of the Roman world.

Its acts were generally shrouded in comparative privacy.

Of the enormities of Nero more particularly it has been already observed, but it may be well to repeat and enforce the observation, that they were comparatively unknown to the mass of the citizens. Some years of sincere benevolence and virtue, some more of discreet and thoughtful vigilance, had disposed the subjects of Nero to cherish a kindly feeling towards their ruler, and to reject as querulous declamation the vague and unproved charges of tyranny which they might sometimes hear made against him. To some crimes, real and manifest, they suffered themselves to be blinded. The Quinquennium of Nero could not be effaced at once from their memories. The remembrance of it has been among the most lasting monuments of the proneness of the Romans,—shall we not say of mankind in general?—to canonize the virtues of the great rather than to execrate their vices. We have seen, moreover, that,

the victims of Nero, unlike those of Caius or Tiberius, perished generally with closed doors. Though their crimes, their sentences, and the manner of their deaths were discussed in the senate and recorded in the public archives, they were withdrawn at least from the public eye, and the story of their sufferings, when it reached at last the ears of the citizens, was less moving than if they had been witnessed in the open day. We must not judge too harshly of the shrinking from public exposure, or the hope of securing indulgence for a surviving family, which induced so many of the accused to anticipate the centurion's sword by suicide: yet the practice was not less really a crime against society; it riveted more strongly the tyranny of the despot, who might smile at being thus relieved from a portion of the odium due to him. Both Thrasea and Cato fell short of the dignity of suffering, the last and noblest lesson it was given them to teach. We must not wonder that the people showed little sympathy with the men who waived a dying appeal to their feelings, to their self-respect, to their love. They chose to die the death of slaves, when they might have approved themselves as martyrs and it was as slaves rather than martyrs that they came to be regarded.[1]

The idea of tyranny familiar to the Romans.

But the Romans, it may be added, had they been more conscious of the cruelties thus perpetrated in the midst of them,—had they felt more keenly the pain and shame of the victims of the tyranny which overshadowed them,—

[1] Several passages of contemporary writers express some bitterness at the desperation with which the best men threw away their lives. Thus Tacitus praises Agricola (*Agric.* c. 42.): "Quia non contumacia neque inani jactatione libertatis famam fatumque provocabat . . . sciant obsequium ac modestiam, si industria ac vigor adsint, eo laudis excedere quod plerique per abrupta, sed in nullum reipublicæ usum, ambitiosa morte inclaruerunt." Comp. *Ann.* iv. 20.; and Martial, i. 9.:

"Nolo virum facili redimit qui sanguine famam;
Hunc volo laudari qui sine morte potest."

would still have borne it with an apathy which it requires some effort to understand. For they were hardened against the sense of wrong and suffering by the viciousness of their own institutions, by their own personal habits and usages, by the daily practice of every household among them. Whenever the Roman entered his own dwelling, the slave chained in the doorway, the thongs hanging from the stairs, the marks of the iron and the cord on the faces of his domestics, all impressed him with the feeling that he was a despot himself; for despot and master were only other words for the same fearful thing, the irresponsible owner of a horde of human chattels.[1] When he seated himself in the circus, and beheld the combats of men with beasts, or of men with their fellow-men,—when he smelt the reeking fumes of blood which saffron odours could not allay, heard the groans of the wounded, and, appealed to with the last look of despair, gave ruthlessly the sign for slaughter, —he could not but be conscious of the same glow of pleasurable excitement at the sight of death and torture which is ascribed to the most ferocious of tyrants. Again, when he invaded a province as quæstor or proconsul, and set himself to amass a fortune without regard to duty or humanity, he felt, not without pride, that if among citizens he was a citizen, he was himself a king or an emperor among the subjects of the state. His own conscience would not suffer him to be indignant at any tyranny he witnessed. He had done as much or more himself. Tyranny was his own birthright: how could he resent its exercise in another? unless it immediately touched himself, what interest had he in resenting it? And

[1] The frightful stories of Vedius Pollio (Dion, liv. 23.), and Pedanius (Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 42.),—with which compare that of Largius Macedo (Plin. *Epist.* iii. 14), may suffice to show that the Roman masters were supported by the law in greater cruelties than any the emperors practised in defiance of it.

for all the iniquities he himself practised, he had no doubt a salvo in his own breast. Slavery he firmly believed to be an eternal law of Nature. The free races were, he was assured, as gods to the servile races. He confessed the more readily, perhaps, that Cæsar was in some sense divine, inasmuch as he claimed to be himself of superior nature to the prostrate herds at his feet. But if Cæsar was divine, must he not acquiesce in Cæsar's sovereign authority?[1] An old state tradition pronounced that the massacres of the circus were politically expedient. That men should be hardened against fear by the frequent spectacle of death was a fixed principle in the moral creed of the Roman. Lastly, that Rome should rule the world seemed to him the final cause of creation.[2] He was not generally troubled by any slur thus cast upon Providence as harsh and partial. He never thought of the moral government of the world as a system of mysterious wisdom and mercy, and it was no part of his philosophy to reconcile the jarring facts around him with the disposition of the Almighty Power to whom he gave the name of Best as well as of Greatest.

The Roman police repressive, not preventive.

The ordinary notion of absolute government, derived from the form it assumes in Europe at the present day, is that of a strict system of prevention, which, by means of a powerful army, an ubiquitous police, and a censorship of

[1] If some were still inconsistent enough to complain of the loss of liberty, Seneca could thus justly rebuke them: "Respondisse tibi servum indignaris, libertumque et uxorem et clientem; deinde de republica libertatem sublatam quereris, quam domi sustulisti." Senec. *de Ira*, iii. 35.

[2] In such a case the evidence of a popular poet is worth more than that of a philosopher. Statius expounds the universal law of tyranny boldly and plainly, *Sylv.* iii. 3. 49.:

"Vice cuncta reguntur
Alternisque regunt: propriis sub regibus omnis
Terra; premit felix regum diademata Roma.
Hanc ducibus frænare datum; mox crescit in illo
Imperium Superis; sed habent et Numina legem."

letters, anticipates every manifestation of freedom in thought or action, from whence inconvenience may arise to it. But this was not the system of the Cæsarean Empire. Faithful to the traditions of the Free State, Augustus had quartered all his armies on the frontiers, and his successors were content with concentrating, cohort by cohort, a small though trusty force for their own protection in the capital. The legions were useful to the emperor, not as instruments for the repression of discontent at home, but as faithful auxiliaries among whom the most dangerous of his nobles might be relegated, in posts which were really no more than honourable exiles. Nor was the regular police of the city an engine of tyranny. Volunteers might be found in every rank to perform the duty of spies; but it was apparently no part of the functions of the guardians of the streets to watch the countenances of the citizens, or beset their privacy. We hear of no intrusion into private assemblies, no dispersion of crowds in the streets. It was generally deemed sufficient to divert the interest of the people from public affairs by supplying them with a constant variety of employment or dissipation, to amuse them, in their casual bursts of anger, by the sacrifice of some object of their aversion, to soothe their discontent by redoubled largesses, to allay their alarms of plague or famine by more extravagant shows and massacres in the circus. Or if at any time their murmurs took shape in action, or secret conspiracies against the government were detected, the arm of the emperor descended upon them swiftly and ruthlessly, and the severity of the punishment stunned and laid them in the dust.

Freedom of thought among the Romans.

Conscious of their power to repress disaffection, it was not therefore the policy of the emperors ostentatiously to prevent it. For this reason we find that they made no effort to impose restraints upon thought. Freedom of

thought may be checked in two ways, and modern despotism resorts in its restless jealousy to both. The one is, to guide ideas by seizing on the channels of education; the other, to subject their utterance to the control of a censorship. In neither one way nor the other did Augustus or Nero interfere at all. From the days of the republic the system of education had been perfectly untrammelled. It was simply a matter of arrangement between the parties directly interested, the teacher and the learner. Neither state nor church pretended to take any concern in it: neither priest nor magistrate regarded it with the slightest jealousy.

System of education independent of priests or magistrates.

Public opinion ranged, under ordinary circumstances, in perfect freedom, and under its unchecked influence both the aims and methods of education continued long to be admirably adapted to make intelligent men and useful citizens. The end of the highest education among the Romans was to fit a man for the discharge of his public duties. But, in theory at least, they took a very liberal view of public duty, and conceived that every thing which refined and enlarged his intellectual powers made him a wiser legislator and an abler magistrate. At the age of seven, or sometimes a few years later, the child began his course of public instruction on the benches of the Grammarian. From him he learned to read and speak his own language step by step with the Greek, and imbued his memory with the thoughts and language of the classics of either tongue, from Homer to Ennius or Virgil. At fourteen, or as soon as the powers of thought began to unfold themselves, he was transferred to the school of the Rhetorician, where he first began to concentrate his studies upon the future business of his life. He was to be made a public man, and therefore above all things a public speaker. He was to be trained for a perfect orator, by declamation, by writing, by careful study of the

best models, by constant exercise in rivalry with his schoolfellows. But it was not the mere trick of action, or knack of speaking, that he was to acquire: he was to be thoroughly informed with the matter requisite for his calling. Every branch of knowledge might sometimes have its application: every art and science might serve on occasion to illustrate the topics presented to him for discussion: and, if any were too remote from the sphere of forensic eloquence, they would serve at least to expand the mind of the pupil, to give breadth and depth and height to his understanding. Among these sciences, however, there was one which held the highest place, one which for its preeminence among them deserved to be removed from the circle of the rhetorician's instructions, and entrusted to the care of a special teacher. At seventeen, or when the fated struggle begins between the moral principles and the instincts of appetite,—at the commencement, such as morality and religion have represented it, of the great battle of life between vice and virtue,—the youth was transferred to the academy of the Philosopher or Sophist, to learn the mysteries of the Good, the Fair, and the Honourable.[1] While he still continued to exercise himself daily in rhetorical studies and practice, he explored the dark by-ways of morals and metaphysics under accomplished teachers, and traversed perhaps the whole circuit of Grecian speculation before he determined in which sect definitively to enrol himself.

Its extent and liberality.

Such a course of education, it must be allowed, was nobly conceived; and at the hands of the Romans it received fair play; for it was warped by no sectarian prejudices, nor confined by narrow notions of state policy. At first, indeed, the government

[1] Thus Persius, at twelve years, entered the school of the grammarian Palæmon; thence he went to the rhetor Virginius; and finally, at sixteen, to the philosopher Cornutus. Suet. *vit. Pers.*

looked with distrust on the new science of the rhetoricians, and the strange doctrines of the sophists from beyond the sea: the stern republic of Cato suspected the tendencies of a learning imported by the effeminate parasites of conquered Greece. But even these camp prejudices were transient, and in the later times of the Free State the intellect of the Roman youth was allowed to be developed without restraint, and undoubtedly with no common success. The Roman men of affairs were generally men of well-trained understandings. Their soldiers could speak and write as well as command. Their knowledge of ideas and letters was wide in its range, though perhaps their views had little depth, and still less originality. But there is something very remarkable in the ease with which they could turn from the active to the literary life, from study to composition, from speaking to speculation. With the fall of freedom the sphere of eloquence became lamentably restricted, and oratory degenerated into mere declamation: the subjects to which the learner was directed were frivolous, and the nature of his preparation in art was no doubt less discursive and complete.[1] Nevertheless, even under the empire, the education of youth bore honourable fruit. It created men of letters, if not practical statesmen; it sharpened the intellect, formed habits of industry, enlivened thought, and fostered a variety of interests, and an

High training of public men at Rome under the Free State.

Not materially lowered under the empire.

[1] For the subjects of declamation compare what has been said in chap. xli.; and see Tacitus, *Dial. de Orat.* 35.: "Sequitur ut materiæ abhorrenti a veritate declamatio quoque adhibeatur. Sic fit ut *tyrannicidarum præmia*, aut vitiatarum electiones, aut pestilentiæ remedia, aut incesta matrum, aut quicquid in schola quotidie agitur, in foro vel raro vel nunquam, ingentibus verbis persequuntur;" and Petron. *Satyr.* 1.: "Et ideo adulescentulos existimo in scholis stultissimos fieri, quia nihil ex iis quæ in usu habemus aut audiunt aut vident, sed piratas cum catenis in litore stantes, sed *tyrannos* edicta scribentes," &c.

aptitude for manifold pursuits. It continued as before to be exercised with perfect freedom. The most jealous of the Cæsars made no attempt to control it, to dictate its subjects, and prescribe its methods. Its text-books were still, as ever, the most famous compositions of republican Greece; the favourite topics of its declamations were the glories and virtues of the freemen of antiquity, and the praise of tyrannicide resounded from all its benches.[1] Even the milder method of guiding education, by enlisting salaried professors in the interest of the government, was not discovered till a later period; even then we shall find reason to question whether it was adopted as a precaution of state policy, or rather as a cheap subornation of flattery.

Declamation in praise of liberty and tyrannicide

The same indulgence which was extended to education smiled upon the literature which flowed so copiously from it. There was no restriction on writing or publication at Rome analogous to our censorships and licensing acts. The fact that books were copied by the hand, and not printed for general circulation, seems to present no real difficulty to the enforcement of such restrictions, had it been the wish of the government to enforce them. The noble Roman, indeed, surrounded by freedmen and clients of various ability, by rhetoricians and sophists, poets and declaimers, had within his own doors private aid for executing his literary projects; and when his work was compiled, he had

No restrictions on freedom of writing.

[1] The well-known line of Juvenal,

"Cum perimit sævos classis numerosa tyrannos,"

is confirmed by Tacitus above cited, and by the subjects of some of the declamations ascribed to Quintilian, which have come down to us. The only exceptions to this licence of teaching mentioned in history, are the case of Carrinas Secundus, banished by Caius for declaiming in favour of tyrannicide (Dion, lix. 20), and of the rhetor Virginius and the philosopher Musonius Rufus, proscribed by Nero, as Tacitus says, on account of their influence over youth, but ostensibly implicated in the conspiracy of Piso. *Ann.* xv 71.

in the slaves of his household the hands for multiplying copies, for dressing and binding them, and sending forth an edition, as we should say, of his work to the select public of his own class or society.[1] The circulation of compositions thus manipulated might be to some extent surreptitious and secret. But such a mode of proceeding was necessarily confined to few. The ordinary writer must have had recourse to a professional publisher, who undertook, as a tradesman, to present his work for profit to the world. Upon these agents the government might have had all the hold it required: yet it never demanded the sight beforehand of any speech, essay, or satire which was advertised as about to appear. It was still content to punish after publication what it deemed to be censurable excesses. Severe and arbitrary as some of its proceedings were in this respect, of which instances have been already recorded, it must be allowed that these prosecutions of written works were rare and exceptional, and that the traces we discover of the freedom of letters, even under the worst emperors, leave on the whole a strong impression of the general leniency of their policy in this particular.[2]

This indulgence accepted in compensation for restriction upon public action.

The fear, indeed, of such retrospective censorship had damped the ardour of men of letters through the dark days of Tiberius, and no man coveted eminence as a writer under the tyranny of his successor, who proscribed Homer and Virgil, and scowled with envious moroseness upon every kind of excellence. But Claudius

[1] See Corn. Nep. *in Att.* 13.; Cic. *ad Att.* iv. 4. 5. 8., xiii. 12. 44.

[2] The patience of Nero under the bitterest pasquinades is remarked but not explained by Suetonius, *Ner.* 39.: "Mirum et vel præcipue notabile inter hæc fuit, nihil eum patientius quam maledicta et convicia hominum tulisse, neque in ullos leniorem, quam qui se dictis aut carminibus lacessissent, exstitisse." He proceeds to cite examples, some of which have been quoted in the preceding chapter.

was a patron of letters, perhaps not an unenlightened patron. Historical composition flourished again under the auspices of the imperial historian. The accession of Nero, youthful and benign to every talent, was the signal for renewed activity in all departments of literature, particularly in the lighter, such as might expect especial countenance from the favourite of Apollo. Undoubtedly the licence which was extended to writings at this period was accepted by the mass of the rising generation of educated men, as compensation for the restraints imposed on them in active life. While the interchange of thought was free, or appeared so, they might fondly persuade themselves that they were freemen themselves. Here, at least, the traditions of the republic were unbroken.

Consideration of the extent of the class of readers.

Nor are we to suppose that the circle of readers was so small that the government could safely despise the influence of an unpalatable composition. Whatever was its extent it was coincident, at least, with the class of which the government was naturally most jealous. The publications of Rome were perused no doubt by the senators, the knights and the freedmen of the city: there is evidence to show that in many cases they penetrated far into the provinces, and for some kinds of writing, at least, there was a regular sale at Lugdunum, or any other provincial capital.[1] Some curious calculations have been made, to show that the rapidity with which copies could be multiplied by hand from dictation was little less than that of printing. It is not impossible that a limited number of

[1] The authorities on this subject are collected, but with little critical discrimination, by Adolf Schmidt. *Denk und Glaubensfreiheit*, pp. 116. 125. The younger Pliny, as a metropolitan man of letters, imagined there could be no such thing as a bookseller at Lugdunum; he was the more pleased to learn that his own compositions were on sale there, among the latest publications of the trade at Rome. See *Epist.* ix. 11.

copies, a hundred for instance, could be written off quicker in this way in the librarian's workshop, than a single one could be set up in type by the printer. This, of course, supposes the employment of a multitude of scribes; but these were slaves cheaply purchased, and maintained at little cost.[1] The exceedingly low price of books at Rome, if we may take the poems of a popular author as an example, show that the labour must have been much less or much cheaper than we usually imagine.[2] The world of Roman society, the circles of rank and fashion, in the city and its neighbourhood, were permeated by the published thoughts of their favourite writers with electric speed and electric diffusiveness.[3] It would be too much to dignify with the name of devotion to literature the aptitude of the educated Roman for the use of his style and tablets. No doubt the vice of the system of instruction imparted to him was its tendency to degenerate into the conning of facts, maxims, and the commonplaces of the schools, rather than the cultivation of thought. Trained from child-

[1] Schmidt's remarks on this subject are well worth considering. He says boldly, "was in der Gegenwart für die Literatur die Presse ist, das war im Alterthum die Sklaverei," p. 119. Certainly the means possessed by the ancients for multiplying copies were far beyond those of the middle ages.

[2] For the exceeding cheapness of the most popular books see Martial, i. 118.: "Denariis tibi quinque Martialem." It would seem that a copy of one book at least of Martial (about 700 lines) smoothed with pumice, and elegantly bound, was sold for 3*s*. 4*d*.; a plainer copy (comp. i. 67.) for about 1*s*. 6*d*., or (xiii. 3.) even for 4*d*., and still leave a profit to the bookseller:

> "Omnis in hoc gracili Xeniorum turba libello
> Constabit nummis quatuor empta tibi.
> Quatuor est nimium: poterit constare duobus;
> Et faciet lucrum bibliopola Tryphon."

[3] One book of Martial (540 verses) could be transcribed in an hour (ii. 1. 5.): "hæc una peragit librarius hora." On the rapidity of writing Schmidt quotes Galen, *de Cogn. Morb.* c. 9., which shows that shorthand was in common use for published books. Schmidt, pp. 132. 136.

hood to observe and imitate, he was versed in all the forms of literature, while he lacked perhaps the ideas to fill them. Hence the facility with which mere children, as in the cases more than once referred to, produced set orations on hackneyed subjects. With their notebooks crammed with the accumulated jottings from a long course of dictations, they were prepared to produce, at short notice, passable exercitations on any ordinary topic. Ovid, speaking of the precocity of his poetical talent, tells us that in childhood his thoughts ran spontaneously in verse; and the phrases with which the tablets or the memory of the Romans were stored might seem of their own accord to take the form of continuous composition.

Facilities attending the composition and multiplication of books.

Almost every distinguished man among them seems to have kept his journal or Ephemerides; to have made collections of wise and witty sayings; to have turned some of his observations on men and things into verse; to have strung together a volume of miscellaneous extracts from his reading; and the transcription of a few copies of these stray leaves constituted the publication of a book.

Characteristics of the popular literature of the time.

With the character of the common literature of the day the Cæsarean government had every selfish reason to be satisfied. It was engrossing; it occupied many restless minds to the exclusion of all dangerous subjects, either of action or reflection. It seems to have been lively; it was, at least, fascinating. It was generally voluptuous, to enervate the strong and daring; it was satisfied with a low range of topics, leaving loftier themes to reserved and solitary genius. Such was the kind of literature in which Nero himself was ambitious of shining; such were the writings he could best appreciate. The few remaining verses which are ascribed to him, or supposed to be parodies upon him, seem to show that he was a proficient in the lilting metre and empty pret-

tiness of expression which marked the poetical style of his tutor.[1] He is said, indeed, to have aspired to the fame of an historian, and to have taken for his subject the Affairs of Rome. His performance, however, never went beyond a consideration of the number of books to which the work should extend. The emperor, urged a flatterer, should not deign to compose less than four hundred volumes on the imperial theme. The Stoic Cornutus bluntly suggested that the public would not read a work so prolix. *Yet,* replied Nero, *your master Chrysippus wrote as many books. . . . . But they at least,* returned the sage, *were of some use to mankind.*[2]

Fashion of historical composition.

But whatever the truth of this story may be, the Romans of this age were not solely triflers in the drama, in epigram and fugitive poetry; men were found not only to write but to read vast compilations of history, now known to us only by the number of volumes they are said to have filled. The works of the emperor Claudius, of Servilius Nonianus, and Aufidius Bassus, attest the patient labour of these men of letters; men who must have looked for reputation rather from the recitation of their compositions, book by book, to select audiences, than to their wide dissemination by the labour of copyists. An account of the life and studies of the elder Pliny, the type of Roman industry at the same time both in affairs and letters, will find its proper place at a later period; but we may here remark that during the reign of Nero this distinguished man, after holding for many years a military command in Germany, was devoting himself to study in retirement, meditating a history of the German wars which

Extraordinary literary activity of the elder Pliny.

[1] Seneca (*Nat. Qu.* i. 5.) quotes a verse of Nero's:—

"Colla Cytheriacæ splendent agitata columbæ."

The well-known lines in Persius, *Sat.* i., are not improbably parodies.

[2] Dion, lxii. 29.

he deemed it inexpedient to put on paper in times of tyranny, composing a work on grammar and a treatise on the literary life, accumulating extracts from his reading or notes of his thoughts and conversation which extended at his death to a hundred and sixty volumes, and preparing slowly and methodically, from the perusal of many hundreds of works, the wonderful encyclopædia of Roman arts and learning which he published eventually under the name of the Natural History.

Discouragement of contemporary history.

The noble Roman chafed indeed at the restraints which prudence prescribed him in the relation of contemporary events, in which truth could seldom be told without impugning the conduct of men in power, court favourites or court parasites, if it did not hit the blots in the character of Cæsar himself. It was still more galling, perhaps, to leave the field open to the flatterers and intriguers who debased history into mere panegyric, and filled the ear of Rome with unblushing falsehood. The harsh repression exercised towards the utterers of the truth in this particular, had deterred the most honourable men from her ill-requited service, and checked the licence of remark on the personages around him which the Roman magnate cherished as his birthright. To many this restraint on personal criticism was the sorest point in their servitude. But with this exception the mind of the educated classes still flowed freely enough in the well-worn channels of literature, and the stability of the government was no doubt, in a great degree, founded on the ease and freedom with which the men of letters moved in their chains, and their general acquiescence in the position assigned them.[1]

[1] It is fair to remark, on the other hand, that the strictures of contemporary history were not checked at Rome, as among ourselves within recent times, by the code of honour, nor practically at least, as it would appear, by a law of libel.

Alliance of philosophy at Rome with religion and government.

The class, never numerous at Rome, which interested itself in moral speculations, had enjoyed remarkable freedom from interference at the hands of constituted authority. The proud aristocracy of the senate was little troubled by the nervous alarms at heterodoxy, so common to half-instructed democracies, full of prejudices, and conscious of their want of skill and learning to defend them. Hence, except once or twice, at moments of great intellectual disturbance, the government of the Free State had suffered the philosophers to teach as they pleased, and put no restraints on the spirit of inquiry which was sapping the positive beliefs of the day. If it ever evinced any jealousy of the new teaching, it was against the Greek foreigner, not against the heretic, against the enemy of Rome, not the enemy of the gods, that it was directed. The full establishment of the Roman power in the East was followed by complete acquiescence in the teaching, however liberal and daring, which flowed from that source to the West. From the last century of the republic all attempt at interference ceased. The young Roman noble was initiated, as a matter of course, in the contentions of the Academy and the Lyceum; he traversed the inevitable career from doubt to rationalism, and from rationalism to doubt again; while neither priests nor magistrates complained of the new sphere of ideas into which he was launched, sure, as they were, to extinguish in his mind the old belief of his countrymen. All the Grecian schools agreed at least in one thing, namely, to inculcate outward respect for established forms of religion as an instrument of government. It might be curious to trace the origin of this peculiar feature in their teaching; whether it was a prudent concession to the demands of the authorities, under which they taught; whether they were unconsciously swayed by the apprehension that

in the uncertainty which confessedly hung over their own undetermined principles, the Voice of the People might be after all a faint echo of the Voice of God: but so it was that Stoic, Epicurean, Peripatetic and Eclectic, all consented to practise on public occasions the rites which they not less openly derided in their speaking and writing. The compromise was certainly effectual, at least to a late period.

Attitude of opposition to government first assumed by the Stoics under the empire.

Modern despotisms are charged with allowing the freest licence of religious discussion, not in the interest of truth, but as a necessary compensation for the silence they impose upon all discussion on politics.[1] It will be seen that if Roman imperialism is liable to the same charge, it was at least no new invention of tyranny. The Sceptic and the Atheist had been allowed full scope under the government of the senate, and the Cæsars, in leaving religion still open to their attacks, only followed the state tradition bequeathed them from the republic. The philosophers, however, while they accepted freedom as their right, were not bound thereby to keep terms with the government which condescended to grant it. They had a higher mission, and a corresponding sense of duty. With the gross and immoral practices, indeed, allowed, encouraged, sometimes even prescribed, by the Pagan superstitions, philosophy did not concern herself. She did not stoop to inform or amend the ignorant rabble of the temple-worshippers: but the opposition between her and the government, when the government became flagrantly wicked and tyrannical, was more and more openly avowed. The wisdom of the Porch was not the antagonist of vulgar vices: but her precepts, ad-

[1] This charge, so commonly made against certain Continental governments at the present day, and with peculiar force against the old monarchy of France (see De Tocqueville's instructive book, *l'Ancien Régime et la Revolution*, liv. ii. ch. 11., liv. iii. ch. 2.), may be extended, I conceive, with equal truth to oligarchies generally.

dressed to the ruling classes of the empire, stood forth in bold and startling hostility to the principles of existing authority. The city of the Stoics was the city of God, not the city of Cæsar. The empire for which they sighed on earth was the empire of the best and wisest, of the oligarchs of reason, not the empire of the blind ignoble multitude impersonated in the tribune of its choice. Christian moralists have taunted Stoicism with the hopeless distance at which it stood from the sympathies of mankind in general. Such, they say, is the nature of man, that it requires the prospect of reward, here or hereafter, as an efficient stimulus to virtue. This argument is probably true, and as a general proposition no doubt the Stoics would have also admitted it. But, having themselves no assurance of any such retributive Providence, they aimed at raising the choicest spirits from the common level to a higher standard of excellence, and inculcated duty without reward as the end of existence, not as a religion for the many, but as a philosophy for the few. Shocked as their nobler instincts were at the vile degradation of the multitude, they conceived the Truth as something unappreciable by it. Could the Truth have been made intelligible to mankind in general, it would, in their view, have ceased to be truth at all. And this, after all, was very similar to the view of Christianity itself entertained by some of our primitive teachers. Tertullian in a striking passage asserted broadly that the Cæsars would long since have been converted to Christianity, if Christians could be themselves Cæsars, that is, if government could be Christian.[1] Christianity, he conceived, must always stand apart from the ordinary march of affairs; the true faith could only be the faith of a chosen congregation; mankind in general were

[1] Tertull. *Apolog.* 21.: "Sed et Cæsares credidissent super Christo, si aut Cæsares non essent sæculo necessarii, aut *si Christiani potuissent esse Cæsares.*"

equally incapable of moral renovation and of spiritual conversion.

Let the Stoics, then, be judged solely by what they attempted. Their aims were high, but not wide-reaching. They sought to make some men more than human, but there was no question with them of the few or the many. They boasted that their preternatural standard of holiness was not absolutely unattainable, and if they could point to a single Cato or a single Thrasea, as having attained to it, their problem was solved, their principle was established. Virtue had become impersonate. Man had become God. The end of creation was accomplished. Even from the attempt to accomplish this end, however imperfectly, other blessings might flow, indirectly and collaterally: though, indeed, by the true mystic of the Porch these were little heeded. The aspirations, however, of the Stoics in general were really less visionary and unpractical. They descended from the clouds to earth to impregnate with noble and fruitful principles such forms of government as were actually accessible to them. Captivated as they often were by the aspect of the law, as the exponent of the Divine Will, the representative of Divine Justice upon earth, they devoted themselves to moulding it to their notions, and informed it with wise and lofty maxims. Stoicism enlarged the minds of its worthy votaries by purer conceptions of Deity, and more liberal views of humanity, teaching the unity of God with man, and of men with one another, asserting the supremacy of the Will over the Passions, of Mind over Matter, of eternal Duty over temporal Expediency. It sublimed every aspiration after the Good, the Just, the Honourable, by pronouncing it the instinct of divinity within us. The immortality of the soul, the triumph of the Righteous, a fleeting Present and an illimitable Future, these indeed were doctrines which some

Principles on which Stoicism is to be judged.

Stoics held, some perhaps ventured to teach dogmatically: but they were not the true vital principles of the sect; they savoured too much of offering bribes to virtue; they were, in short, too popular, to seduce the sterner preachers of a morality which must have no regard either to punishment on the one hand, or reward on the other.[1]

Stoicism attractive at this period to the noblest characters at Rome.

Galling indeed to the selfish voluptuaries of the palace must have been the bold and even ostentatious preaching of these soul-stirring doctrines, which seemed to proclaim a higher freedom than that of the body, a nobler existence than that of the world and the flesh.[2] Whatever there was of ardour, of generosity and self-devotion, among the Roman youth at this era of national torpor, was absorbed in the strong current of Stoicism. The Epicurism of the earlier empire had been the plea of men who were ashamed of the renunciation they had made of their independence. But since independence had become a mere phantom of the past, the philosophy which excused men for deserting it was no longer specially attractive; while Stoicism, which could substitute a higher object in its place, assumed in its turn the ascendant. Under the Free State it had generally been admitted that the maxims of the Porch, stiff and

[1] Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, says M. Denis (*Idées Morales dans l'Antiquité*, ii. 253.), faithful to the old traditions of the Porch, speak but faintly and obscurely on the immortality of the soul. The only philosophers who formally admit it are Seneca, Plutarch, and Maximus Tyrius; the former as a matter of hope, the others as an incontestable dogma.

[2] The expression "the flesh" for human passions, which has been almost appropriated to Christian teaching, is found at this time in Seneca. In the *Consolatio ad Marciam*, c. 24., he says, as St. Paul might have said: "Animo cum carne grave certamen." Comp. Persius, *Sat.* ii. in fin.:

"Et bona Dis ex hac scelerata ducere pulpa."

It had been already used commonly by Philo, who took it perhaps from the Septuagint. *Sirac.* xxiii. 23.

harsh as they were, ill accorded with the conduct of public affairs, and the government of mankind in general. The experience, perhaps the instinct, of the free-born Roman assured him that a man could not be an active and useful citizen, and at the same time the disciple of a speculative Puritanism. The pretensions of the jurist Sulpicius to unite the two characters had moved the derision of Cicero: the attempt of Cato had issued in more serious consequences; it had hastened the fall of the republic. But these men had few admirers or followers in their own day. It was under the empire, when man's free will had no longer scope for action, that the philosophy which exalted Fate above all human affairs found acceptance with thoughtful and melancholy idlers. Stoicism became a consolation for inactivity, not a stimulus to action. Views of the highest wisdom which led men's speculations away from the deceitful shows of life, and fixed them upon ideal excellences, might be an object of suspicion to the government; they might be interpreted by timid and jealous rulers as discontent with existing circumstances, disaffection towards the empire, a disposition to change and innovation. Nevertheless, the charge against them, which Tacitus supposes to have been urged by Tigellinus, that they made men restless and ambitious meddlers with affairs, is strongly belied by all we read about the most genuine and consistent professors of Stoicism at this period at Rome.[1] Possibly it is not intended to express the opinion of the author himself: possibly it is directed against the false pretenders to the title, or the ardent patriots who failed to recognise the purely spiritual character of its precepts. Seneca seems, at all events, to speak more accurately, when he says that they are in error who imagine that the true philosopher is contumacious,

The charge against it of contumaciousness and seditiousness not well grounded.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 57.: "Assumpta Stoicorum arrogantia, sectaque, quæ turbidos et negotiorum appetentes faciat."

refractory, a despiser of magistrates and governments.[1] Even the notion, so commonly adopted, that the Stoics particularly devoted themselves to the science of law, and played a great part in constructing the fabric of Roman jurisprudence, is much mistaken or exaggerated.[2] The legal principles which can be traced to their moral maxims are but few; and, indeed, the reasoners who were bound to maintain the equality of all sins could hardly have interested themselves in the just apportionment of punishments to crimes. All enthusiasm, no doubt, is hateful to tyranny. The enthusiasm of the Stoics was to be feared, to be watched, to be controlled. Yet this sentiment, checked as it was by the force of circumstances, and the deadly apathy of society around it, passed in many noble spirits of the sect into a kind of quietism. They had no concern with the republic: they lived under the Gods, not under Cæsar.[3] It became their aim and pride rather to bear all things than to dare anything. They tried to persuade the emperor that he was a slave, but they made no attempt to deprive him of his sovereignty. Nero would smile, perhaps, at the declamations he heard on the splendid text of the poet: *Great Father of the Gods, punish Thou tyrants no other wise than thus: let them behold the Virtue they have abandoned, and pine away at the*

Political innocence of its professors.

[1] Senec. *Ep.* 73.: "Errare mihi videntur qui existimant philosophiæ fideliter deditos contumaces esse ac refractarios, et contemptores magistratuum."

[2] This remark is opposed to the common opinion of the commentators on Roman law, which the few and trifling coincidences which Heineccius discovers between the Stoic and the legal principles are surely not sufficient to justify. See *Antiqu. Rom.* I. i. 3. That under the early empire many jurisconsults were Stoics would naturally follow from the prevalence of the Stoic philosophy among the highest order of minds at that period.

[3] So Apollonius of Tyana, himself an Eclectic, could say in the true spirit of the Stoics: ἐμοὶ πολιτείας μὲν οὐδεμιᾶς μέλει· ζῶ γὰρ ὑπὸ τοῖς θεοῖς. Philostr. *Vit. Apoll.* v. 35.

loss of her.[1] On the whole, then, the philosophers were little offensive to the government. They enjoyed accordingly an impunity which they might mistake for deference. It was known, perhaps, that they were discredited among the masses of the people by the worthless character of the many hypocrites who assumed their name; and the emperors observed with complacency the popular suspicion under which the best men laboured, confounded as they too often were with notorious pretenders.[2] To a late period in Nero's reign they remained, as we have seen, entirely unmolested: it was not till they were urged by patriotism or humanity to engage in the intrigues of political conspirators, that they became objects themselves of imperial hostility. Even then, the proscription fell on individuals only; it was never extended to the class: the schools were never closed, the teachers were never silenced, the principles were never condemned.[3] All this we shall witness at a later period;

[1] Persius, *Sat.* iii. 35.:

"Magne Pater Divum, sævos punire tyrannos . . .
Haud alia ratione velis . . . .
Virtutem videant intabescantque relicta."

[2] Quintil. *Procem. Inst.* i. "Veterum quidem sapientiæ professorum multos et honesta præcepisse, et ut præceperunt etiam vixisse, facile concesserim: nostris vero temporibus sub hoc nomine maxima in plerisque vitia latuerunt: non enim virtute et studiis ut haberentur philosophi laborabant, sed vultum et tristitiam, et dissentientem a cæteris habitum pessimis moribus prætendebant." Comp. Juvenal, ii. 3.:

"Qui Curios simulant et Bacchanalia vivunt . . . .
Fronti nulla fides," &c.

[3] Canus Julius, the Stoic, is reputed the first of the philosophers who suffered from the jealousy of the empire. The circumstances of his death, under Caius, are set forth with great pomp by Seneca (*Tranquill. Anim.* 14.); but the charges against him are not mentioned. Pætus suffered under Claudius, and many philosophers were sacrificed by Nero, but always for political offences. The notion that Nero banished the philosophers from Rome and Italy, though commonly asserted (see Imhof, *Domitianus*, p. 104.), is unquestionably erroneous. It rests merely on the assertion of the rhetorician Philostratus (*Vit. Apoll.* iv. 35.), but this Brucker (*Hist.*

though Stoicism, we shall still remark, was not officially smitten, till it perversely attacked an indulgent prince and a liberal monarchy. The pupil of Seneca, at least, is guiltless of the persecution of his master's philosophy. I repeat that we must appreciate to its full extent the freedom of thought conceded by the empire, to understand the patience of the Romans under the restraint it placed upon action.

The revival of religion under Augustus to a great extent a genuine movement.

But these considerations apply only to the higher classes of the state, to which the exercise of the intellect was a privilege dearly prized, earned by toil, guarded with jealousy, esteemed the badge of their preeminence. Let us turn now to the subjects which interested the vulgar herd of the city and the provinces, and examine how far the liberty allowed in these respects might console them for the losses they sustained, when they placed themselves under a master's control. Little as even the multitude believed in the dogmas of the national religion, they were still devotedly attached to their ancient rites and usages; they required their rulers to pay outward deference to the gods, as symbols, at least, of truth, if not truth itself, actual and positive. The revival of religion by Augustus was not mere statecraft: it was the expression of a real want of the age, and it had great and lasting results. If it gave no genuine impulse to belief in the mind of the Romans, it nevertheless undoubtedly confirmed them for ages in practices which had all the signs, and some perhaps of the effects, of actual belief. It reanimated the spirit of worship and respect for superior existences. The current of men's spiritual affections continued to set steadily in the direction of ritual observance. The restoration, adorning, and

Phil. ii. 118.) very reasonably interprets of a prohibition of magic, to which Apollonius, according to his biographer, pretended. See Newman on Apollon. Tyanæus, in the *Encycl. Metropolitana.*

multiplication of temples went on from Cæsar to Cæsar. The established sacrifices were offered, the appointed auspices observed, year by year continually. There is no apparent indication of a decrease in the number of temple-worshippers; though the stream of devotion might fluctuate towards rival fanes, it rolled on with undiminished force and volume.[1] The priesthood remained as grave and honourable a function as ever; the temples continued to receive lavish gifts and endowments. Though the most illustrious of the oracles fell into disuse, and the silence of Apollo at Delphi was ascribed to the growing sinfulness of the times by the pious apprehensions of the multitude, to the jealous policy of kings by the juster observation of political reasoners, the science of divination flourished with unabated luxuriance, and new prophets sprang into repute to attract the inquirers who were repelled from the voiceless tripods of the old.[2] The priests contrived to retain the

[1] This assertion is opposed to the general opinion, and writers on the subject have repeated one another, or appealed in succession to a common stock of texts in confirmation of a different view. I believe the texts in question are the following only: Propert. ii. 6. 35.:

. . . . "Velavit aranea fanum
Et mala desertos occupat herba Deos;"

and iii. 13. 47.:

"At nunc desertis cessant sacraria lucis,
Aurum omnes victa jam pietate colunt;"

both of which, besides their rhetorical character, refer to a period antecedent to the revival we are considering. Philostratus, in *Vit. Apoll.* i. 2., says that some temples were refilled by his philosopher after having suffered desertion; but this does not refer to Rome or Italy. The passage in Pliny, *Ep.* v. 97., and Lucian, *Timon*, 4., refer, such as they are, to another period. Such are the slender authorities, however, which seem to satisfy Neander, *Kirchengeschichte*, i. 80.; Tzschirner, *Fall des Heidenthums*, 113.; and Schmidt, a sedulous collector of texts, *Denk und Glaubensfreiheit*, 168.

[2] On the silence of the Delphic oracle, Juvenal, vi. 555.:

. . . . "Delphis oracula cessant."

submission of the vulgar, ever willingly persuaded, to their pretended communications with heaven, by the fame of wonders worked by images or in temples, and still more by the supposed fulfilment of their auguries. It was the interest of the government to humour this submission under discreet regulations, and of its more enlightened subjects to humour the government itself by affecting to join in it, so that the populace became the victim of a double conspiracy. The policy of the state is freely disclosed to us in the counsels ascribed by Dion to Mæcenas, which no doubt represent in substance the views of the emperors and their advisers even at this period. *Be careful*, he said, *yourself to worship the gods always and everywhere, according to the customs of Rome, and compel others to do likewise; but detest and punish the promoters of strange religions, not for the sake of the gods only, but because such innovators beguile men into foreign sentiments and customs, and hence arise plots, combinations, and clubs, which are especially dangerous to monarchy.*[1] To maintain the exclusive practice of the genuine Roman religion, if indeed it could be accurately defined, had been long deemed impossible under the republic. A compromise had been effected by granting toleration, sometimes by special decree, as in the

Lucan gives one reason which might be assigned for it: v. 113.:

"Postquam reges timuere futura
Et Superos vetuere loqui."

And again, 140.:

"Seu Pæan, solitus templis arcere nocentes,
Ora quibus solvat nostro non invenit ævo."

Comp. Plutarch, *de Defectu Oraculorum*, 5. foll. Lucian, indeed, at a somewhat later period, seems to refer to Delphi as still prophetic: *ἢ ψευδεῖς εἰσὶν οἱ νῦν ἐκπίπτοντες ἐκεῖ χρησμοί.*—*Alexander*, 43. But possibly the work is not genuine.

[1] Dion, lii. 36. Comp. Cic. *de Leg.* ii. 8.: "Separatim nemo habessit deos, neve novos, sive advenas, nisi publice adscitos, privatim colunto."

case of the Jews, to certain foreign cults established in their own countries, which it seemed expedient to tolerate, or which had taken too deep root in Rome to be really extirpated. Any other practices or belief, however, that made their way into the city from abroad, must do so at their peril. They were liable at any moment to legal animadversion, and it required the enactment of no new, the rescinding of no old law, to expose them to proscription, whenever the jealousy of the monarchy, more sensitive than the Free State, was awakened against them.[1]

Position of the Roman religion in relation to the superstitions of Gaul and Syria respectively.

The policy of Augustus, accordingly, in the matter of religion, was a more systematic enforcement of the principles of the republic, namely, to endow the state religion with emoluments and honours, to tolerate certain accredited foreign cults, but to forbid and repress all strange and novel usages. It was the attempt, in short, to cast the religious sentiments of the age in a mould, once for all, from which there should be no escape in the future.[2] The moment might appear well chosen for such an attempt, when in the prevailing fusion of nations and opinions, and the wide-spread disappointment of moral and religious speculations, men seemed content to rest from all further experiment in a decently

[1] Such was the distinction between the religiones licitæ and illicitæ. Tertullian, *Apol.* 4. 21.; Minucius Felix, *Octav.* 8. Judaism was licensed, though occasionally the licence was withdrawn, and its professors expelled from Rome by a special decree. Christianity, as we shall see, was unlicensed. It had no legal standing in Rome, and, not being a national religion, I presume it had no legal standing anywhere. I merely allude to this subject here to mark the distinction.

[2] It may be worth while to remind the reader of the three constituent elements of the Roman religion: 1. the service of the old Sabine or Italian divinities; 2 the aruspicinal discipline, &c., derived principally from Etruria; 3. the cult of certain foreign deities introduced generally by the advice of special oracles (publice ascitos), such as those of Ceres, Æsculapius, and Cybele.

veiled atheism or pantheism. Such an attempt seems to have succeeded for once in the history of China; but it was singularly ill-timed, as became speedily apparent, in the age and clime which witnessed the origin of Christianity. And, indeed, not yet to advert to the phenomenon of the Christian revelation, the spiritual activity of the human mind throughout the East, at this moment, was such as to defy the control of the emperor's or the prætor's edicts. The ideas of Druidism, the religion of the West, were almost powerless. In Rome they collapsed instantaneously; in the cities of Gaul they yielded without a struggle to Roman forms and nomenclature; it was only in the deep woods and silent plains that they retained a spark of vitality. Not so the Syrian elemental-worship; not so the moral convictions of Judaism and Tsabaism. The crowds which flocked to Rome from the eastern shores of the Mediterranean brought with them practices and prejudices hardly worthy, perhaps, to be called beliefs, which disdained amalgamation with Italian paganism, and however distorted they might be from their original types, acknowledged no constraining influence from the opinions and usages around them. The stronger sentiment, as usual, attracted and controlled the weaker. Jupiter had conquered Hesus and Taranis, but he was a child in the hands of Mithras and Melcarth. The broader forms of the Syrian religion, as established in its native countries, were tolerated in Rome; and from toleration they advanced without pause or hesitation on a career of active proselytism. The symbolic rites of Cybele and Astarte invaded the streets and the forum, and carried off crowds of worshippers from the shrines of Juno and Diana. But they too were tolerant in their turn, and demanded no exclusive devotion from their converts: the idleness and wealth of Rome could afford time and means for the celebration of many new ceremonies in addi-

tion to the simple *performance of divine service* which its own religion prescribed.[1] They offered, and herein was the secret of their success, a mental excitement without the fatigue and agitation of argument. In philosophy no step could be taken without some use of the reasoning powers; every man held his opinions in defiance of all opponents; even the schools of oratory as well as of philosophy had their sects, their masters, their maxims, and their disputations. The noble Roman, indeed, for the most part entertained a professional sophist to think and argue for him: nevertheless it was not till he abandoned his philosophy for his religion that he was completely relieved from intellectual toil and discipline; and doubtless the outward observance of ritual forms was in a great degree the refuge to which he fled from the painful questions of morals and metaphysics. The curious and sometimes awful rites of initiation, the tricks of the magicians, the pretended virtues of charms and amulets, the riddles of emblematical idolatry, enshrined in the form of brutes or monsters half-brute half-human, with which the superstitions of the East abounded, amused the languid interests of the voluptuary who, as has been well remarked, had neither the energy for a moral belief, nor the boldness requisite for a logical scepticism.[2]

The Roman women fascinated by the orgies and ceremonies of the Eastern cults.

While the men's minds were still too hardy to submit to these voluptuous excitements, the women had thrown themselves into them with all the passionate self-abandonment of their weaker natures. Uninstructed, ill-

[1] "Rem divinam facere," to perform holy rites, consisted in the occasional sacrifice, the daily burning of incense and casting of salt and flour into the flame, the one in the temples, the other on the domestic hearth or altar. The more public solemnities, such as processions, hymns, and musical services, together with the fasts and vigils appropriated to foreign divinities, were generally less familiar to the Roman ritual.

[2] Such is nearly the expression of De Broglie in speaking on this subject, in his *l'Église et l'Empire*, '. 49

treated, half-employed, yet vain of the outward show of deference the laws and habits of the age continued to accord them, the Roman matrons followed these frivolous novelties with a fervour which scandalized their supercilious lords. They rushed from the sordid constraint of their lives at home to the licentious freedom of the veiled orgy and masquerading procession. In them they sought too for spiritual consolation, and they found, at least, an occupation and an interest.[1] And beyond this their imaginations were kindled with ideas of communion with the Deity, and exaltation above earthly things, which made them the dupes of charlatans, the prey of ribald intriguers. The story of the unscrupulous gallant who gained possession of his mistress by personating the god Anubis with the connivance and aid of the priests, is one instance recorded, out of many, no doubt, which have passed into oblivion, of the crimes and injuries which vexed the souls of the Roman husbands.[2] Augustus had already banished the Egyptian rites from Rome; but they triumphed over his decrees. Tiberius repeated the same experiment on the submission of their devotees; he caused the temples of Isis to be razed, and even, it is said, executed her priests.[3] But the men

[1] Strabo may have pointed his general remark on the superior devotion of the female sex from personal observation: ἅπαντες γὰρ τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας ἀρχηγοὺς οἴονται τὰς γυναῖκας· αὗται δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἄνδρας προκαλοῦνται πρὸς τὰς ἐπὶ πλέον θεραπείας τῶν θεῶν, καὶ ἑορτὰς, καὶ ποτνιασμούς· σπάνιον δ' εἴ τις ἀνὴρ καθ' αὑτὸν ζῶν εὑρίσκεται τοιοῦτος. —vii. 3. p. 297. See Lipsius on Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 32.

[2] Joseph. *Antiq.* xviii. 3. A Roman knight, Decius Mundus, had tried in vain to seduce Paulina by presents and flatteries. One of his female slaves promised to gain him the object of his passion, and bribed the priests of Isis, whom Paulina worshipped. The priests assure the devotee that Anubis had promised to appear to her. She hastens delighted to the temple; the doors are closed, the lights extinguished, the god reveals himself and demands favours which she dares not deny. Mundus boasts that he has enjoyed her under the semblance of the god. She discloses the injury to her husband, who complains to the emperor Tiberius. Mundus is banished, the priests crucified, the temple overthrown.

[3] The cults of Egypt, with their allegorical monsters and hideous

were now following in the train of the women. The effeminacy of the times involved both sexes in the same vortex of superstition; the Nile-Gods continued to fascinate their votaries with charms which could not be dissolved; the idol of the blear-eyed Egyptian still brandished the terrors of her cymbal, and threatened with blindness the perjurer of the forum.[1] The rites of the Syrian Goddess, if less dangerous than the Isiac to morals and less insulting to the majesty of the Roman household, were perhaps even more degrading. They were more attractive, it would seem, to the lower classes than to the patrician rulers of the state, and thereby escaped the same animadversion. The priests of Astarte roamed from village to village, carrying their sacred image on an ass's back, and at every halt attracted the gaping rustics with the strains of their flutes, danced in a circle round the goddess with their hair dripping with unguents, cut themselves with knives and swords, and dashed their own blood around them, handing finally a cap from rank to rank for the pence, figs, or crusts of the admiring spectators.[2] The obscene mutilation of the priests of Cybele excited still more astonishment, mingled, no doubt, with superstitious terror; but though, as the Mother of the Gods, she was honoured by the Roman matrons with the solemn feast of the Megalesia, the frantic asceticism of her

which at length prevail over the men also.

symbols, were peculiarly hateful to the Romans, who regarded such superstitions as abnormal. But political jealousy contributed to this exceptional treatment, for they do not seem to have been always excluded from the *religiones licitæ*, or licensed observances.

[1] Juvenal, xiii. 93.:

> "Decernat quodcunque volet de corpore nostro
> Isis, et irato feriat mea lumina sistro."

[2] Lucian, *Lucius*, 32. Apuleius, *Metamorph.* viii. in fin., describes these proceedings with his usual animation. His scene is laid beyond the Adriatic, yet there seems no reason to doubt that these ribaldries were imported into Italy.

Eastern devotees found probably no imitators among the manlier sons of Italy.

The time arrived for appreciating the idea of the Divine Unity, the essential dogma of Judaism.

The apologists for polytheism had not yet proclaimed their theory that all the various gods of various nations were only diverse representations of the same Essential Unity. They had gone no further than to countenance the politic interpretations of Cæsar and Augustus, who announced to their Gaulish subjects that Belenus and Teutates were merely other names for Apollo and Mercury. Nevertheless, amidst the distraction of the religious sentiment between its thousands of devotional objects, the time had come for some faint and timid appreciation of the idea of the Divine Unity presented by the nobler theology of the Jews. The Jewish religion had come first under the close observation of the Romans after the conquest of Palestine by Pompeius. Some thousands of the inhabitants had been carried off into slavery, and of these a large proportion, reserved perhaps to grace the conqueror's triumph, had been sold in the Roman markets. Several princes of the nation had been retained as hostages; and these personages, who were treated with great show of courtesy, were allowed, no doubt, the attendance of clients of their own race. The way to the capital of the world was opened, and the Jews continued to flock thither of their own accord: they were impelled by their thirst of lucre and their restless industry: yet they possessed, as far as we know, no special arts or aptitude, like the Greeks or Egyptians, for making themselves necessary or acceptable visitors at the doors of the native Italians. Much did the Romans marvel at the swarms of these uncouth adventurers, with their deeply marked physiognomy, their strong national feelings, their far-reaching reminiscences of past glory, their proud anticipation of a more splendid future, their exclusive usages, their vacant fanes,

their incommunicable Deity. They thronged together in particular quarters of the city, which they almost made their own[1]: their numbers soon amounted to many thousands, and the turbulence which was early remarked as characteristic of them, caused the senate to regard them with jealousy, its orators to denounce them as dangerous subjects. But they were fortunate in finding patrons, first in Cæsar and afterwards in Augustus, who secured them the free exercise of religion, countenanced their assemblies, made gifts to their temple, and even admitted them along with the citizens of the republic to a share in the largesses of corn.[2] If the distribution took place on their Sabbath, the Jews were allowed to apply for their share on the day following. The mysteriousness of their belief, or rather, perhaps, the earnestness of its devotees, exercised an extraordinary influence on the Roman mind. Amidst many public expressions of hatred and disgust, knights and senators still turned towards it with curiosity, interest, and awe. In Palestine rude centurions lowered their ensigns before its symbols, or built synagogues for its worshippers. In Rome the name of its first expounder was held in honour; its sacred books were not unknown, the glowing imagery of their poetry was studied and reproduced. Men and women, the latter doubtless the most numerously, crowded its place of meeting, observed its holy days, and respected its antique traditions. Many, it would seem, were

The Jews in Rome patronized by the first Cæsars.

[1] Philo, *Leg. ad Cai.* p. 1014.: Τὴν πέραν τοῦ Τιβέρεως ποταμοῦ μεγάλην τῆς Ῥώμης ἀποτομὴν . . . κατεχομένην καὶ οἰκουμένην πρὸς Ἰουδαίων. Most of them, it is added, were captives who had been enfranchised, and had become Roman citizens.

[2] Philo, *Leg. ad Cai.* p. 1015. This is an important fact for the consideration of those who estimate the number of the citizens from the number of these recipients of corn. According to Josephus,—but allowance must be made for his spirit of exaggeration,—no less than 8000 Jews resident in Rome joined on one occasion in a petition to Augustus. Joseph. *Antiq.* xvii. 11. 1.

admitted to some partial communion with the Jewish worshippers: though we do not hear of their submitting to the initiatory rites, or to the peculiar abstinences of national Judaism. The foreigner was still reserved in imparting to these converts the secrets of his faith; and the best informed of the Romans continued, to a late period, possessed with the notion that he either had no God at all, or adored him under a vile and bestial symbol, or possibly did not really know what he believed or wherefore.[1]

Judaism becomes fashionable among the citizens,

This dallying with Judaism was a fashionable weakness: it furnished interest or excitement to the dissipated idlers to whom Ovid addressed his meretricious poetry.[2] To such persons it was probably first recommended through the medium of the slaves from Palestine who swarmed in patrician households. The emperor's palace itself seems to have been a nursery of Jewish usages and opinions. The Columbaria of Claudius, recently discovered, reveal a number of Hebrew names among the imperial freedmen; and, what is still more remarkable, many are the same names, albeit Greek and not Hebrew, which occur in the salutations of St. Paul to his fellow-countrymen in the capital.[3] Assuredly there were in *Cæsar's*

and is introduced among the freedmen of the palace.

[1] Comp. Juvenal. xiv. 97.: "Nil præter nubes et cœli numen adorant." Lucan, *Phars.* ii. 592.: "Et dedita sacris Incerti Judæa Dei." Seneca, quoted by S. Augustin, *de Civ. Dei*, vi. 11.: "Major pars populi facit quod cur faciat ignorat." For the symbol, the ass's head, see Tac. *Hist.* v. 4.

[2] Ovid, *Art. Amand.* i. 416.; *Rem. Amor.* 220.; Tibull. i. 3. 18.

[3] I refer to Mr. Lightfoot's account of the inscriptions in certain Columbaria recently discovered at Rome, *Journal of Class. Philol.* No. X. p. 57., from Henzen's supplement to Orelli's Collection. These were receptacles for the ashes of slaves and freedmen of the imperial family. Some of the names, as Hermas and Nereis, are connected with the Claudian gens; others, as Tryphæna and Tryphera, with the Valerian, that of Messalina; others, as Crescens, Philetus, Hymenæus, are mentioned as Cæsar's freedmen; others again, viz. Philologus and Ampliatus (Amplias), occur indepen-

household both slaves and freedmen of every race and nation subject to Rome: but that the connexion between it and Judea should be more than usually close, might be expected from the favour in which the Jews were held by the first emperors, and from the intimacy of the imperial family with so many Jewish princes detained within the precincts of the palace. Judea, under the sway of the procurators, was governed directly from the emperor's own chamber; in one instance a freedman of the emperor administered its affairs, as his master's private property.[1] When we read in the Jewish historian that Poppæa, the murderess and adulteress, was a *devout woman*, we must suppose that she was regarded as a patroness by the Jewish clients of Nero's household; in moments of threatened persecution she may have befriended them, nor is it improbable that she admired their usages, humoured their prejudices, and partook of the fashionable inclination to join in their ceremonies.[2]

Turbulence of the Jews at Rome. The government evinces jealousy of them.

The favour in which the Jews were held by the emperor was indeed precarious. Beyond the walls of the palace, and of other noble mansions, they were, as we have said, generally disliked; the apprehension which their unquiet attitude at home continued more and more to inspire, penetrated to the centre of the Roman power, and even at Rome every outbreak of sullen fierceness among them was regarded as a symptom of national disaffection. They were accused not of turbulence only, but of corrupting the

dently. Among them are some names apparently Jewish, as Baricha, Zabda, Achiba, Giddo, Sabbatis, all Valerii. One at least, Sentia Renata, seems to bespeak a Christian baptism. Comp. *Romans*, c. xvi.

[1] Felix, the favourite of Claudius and Nero, was procurator of Judea, and married to Drusilla, the daughter of Agrippa. Tac. *Hist.* v. 9.

[2] Joseph. *Antiq.* xviii. 7. 11. The dancer Apaturius, Poppæa's favourite, was a Jew.

minds of women; and when, under Tiberius, an effort, as we have seen, was made by the government to check the growing relaxation of female manners, the Jews were marked out for proscription together with the Egyptians. The priests of Isis had been convicted of flagrant immorality, and there was a presumed connexion, of origin if not of character, between her rites and those of the Jewish divinity.[1] Besides the disaffection and the licentiousness imputed to them, they disturbed the peace of the city; for the Jews and Egyptians renewed in Rome the perpetual quarrel of their nations in Alexandria, till they provoked the police of the streets to crush them both together. The rites of both people were interdicted, and four thousand of the free descendants of Jewish slaves and captives were transported at once to Sardinia, while all the Jews at Rome of free origin were required to quit the shores of Italy, or abjure their *profane superstition.*[2] It would seem, however, that the latter part, at least, of this severe edict was not strictly executed. The Jews bowed to the storm, conformed perhaps for a time, but soon returned to their old quarters and renewed their old practices. Those who were attached to the magnates of the city found, no doubt, powerful protectors. They celebrated the birthday of their deceased king, and adored him as a god with pomp and fervour, to avert perhaps the

[1] The ancient emigration of the Jews from Egypt was known, though under strange disfigurements, to the Romans (Tac. *Hist.* v. 3.); the influence of the Jewish race in Alexandria was also notorious; and the Jews in Rome spoke probably the same dialect of Greek as their brethren in Egypt. We may presume, moreover, that they had imbibed from the Alexandrians, or imparted to them, many religious as well as social usages. The linen robes and fillets common to the priesthoods both of Jerusalem and Alexandria seemed to connect them with one another, and were a conspicuous point of difference between them and the priesthoods of Greece and Rome. Thus Lucan, with a distinctive epithet, "Linigerum placidis compellat Anchorea dictis," x. 175.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* ii. 85.; Suet. *Tib.* 36.; Joseph. *Antiq.* xviii. 3. 5. See vol. v., chapter xliv.

jealousy of the government, to which the worship of Jehovah seemed a bond of more dangerous sympathy.[1]

The Jews at Rome, as in their own country, divided into two factions.

Thus at Rome, as well as in their own country, the Jewish people were divided into two classes or factions, of which the one retained the zeal and cherished the aspirations of its national heroes, the other, more courtly and discreet, yielded to the moral influence of the conquerors, and was content to exchange the subjection of its native land for its own personal advantage. While the slaves of the Palatine acquiesced with a complacent smile in their gilded servitude, the artificers and chapmen of the Transtiberine, and the pedlars of the Egerian valley, were agitated year by year with rumours of new Messiahs appearing in the streets of Jerusalem or on the slopes of the wilderness, and drawing after them excited multitudes, till their career was rudely intercepted by the Roman sword. The direct establishment of the Roman power in Palestine by Claudius, following so soon upon the brutal attack on the Jewish faith by Caius, seems to have driven this frantic populace of Judea to a succession of desperate outbreaks. Among the Jewish sojourners in foreign cities, connected as they were by constant intercourse with their native land, the same restless feeling was speedily manifested. It is thus that we can best explain the hasty notice of Suetonius, when he states that Claudius once more expelled the Jews from Rome, on account of their repeated riots at the instigation of a certain Chres-

[1] This is the interpretation which Salvador, I think justly, puts upon the lines of Persius, *Sat.* v. 180.

"At cum
Herodis venere dies, unctaque fenestra
Dispositæ pinguem nebulam vomuere lucernæ . . .
Labra moves tacitus, recutitaque Sabbata palles."

Herod Arippa was dead some years before these lines were written: the homage or worship was paid to his memory.

tus.[1] This name, as is well known, was a form of the title Christus, the anointed Messiah, familiar to the Romans and derived from the Hellenistic Jews themselves, and was the watchword, no doubt, of the disturbers of peace in the city, who looked, at every fresh arrival of exciting news from home, for a divine manifestation in favour of the kingdom of Jehovah.[2] The scarcity which befell the city as well as the provinces at this period might furnish a further motive for an act of prudential severity. It was manifestly expedient to remove from the midst of the needy populace of the forum the most fierce and turbulent of their fellow-subjects. With the return of better times the Jews returned also; but meanwhile the proscription would again have been partial only; the Herodians, under the shelter of noble houses, would shrink from the general persecution, and repudiate, no doubt, with earnest protestations, the crimes and follies of the zealots.

Spiritual pride of the Jewish freedmen at Rome.

Not that the luxurious dependants of the Roman nobles were themselves unmoved amidst the universal ferment of Jewish opinion. They were vain of their own position, and of the influence they had attained over their masters; they were proud of the number of fellow-slaves or freedmen, for the most part refined and intelligent Greeks, who sate at their feet to hear their ancient

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 25.: "Judæos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit" Tertullian (*Apol.* 3.) and Lactantius (*Inst.* i. 4. 7., iv. 7. 5.) explain this word as a metonym for Christ, signifying just or good.

[2] We know the time and place where the believers in Jesus were first called Christians (*Acts*, xi. 26. χρηματίσαι, "received the title, already popularly known, of Christians"); but this does not show that the followers of false Christs had not received the name before, or that the name was not commonly given to both by the heathens without discrimination. For the false Christs, see the commentators on S. Matth. xxiv. 24. ψευδόχριστοι, and Joseph. *Antiq.* xviii. 1. 1. on Judas the Gaulonite, and xx. 5. 1. on Theudas. Comp. for the Jewish view of the subject, Salvador, *Domin. Rom. en Judée*, i. 435.

lore, and drank in with warmed imaginations the wonders of the Law, and the splendid promises of the Prophets. God, they believed, still spake by their mouths; exiles and outcasts as they were, they were still the depositaries of His oracles; in the power of their own eloquence they felt the yet unexhausted power of a living faith in Jehovah. They were convinced that there was still a future before them, a future of glory and spiritual empire; though they sought in vain to penetrate the designs of Providence, and scan the process through which it was to be developed. They too had heard of a Christ here and a Christ there; but they had no hope of a temporal deliverance, and the destruction of each pretended Messiah was a relief to them rather than a disappointment. It was to minds thus prepared that the message of Jesus, the true Christ, the spiritual king of the Jews, was announced. Among the many deliverers who had risen and fallen, one alone, it was declared, had risen again: crucified, dead and buried, He had been raised from the grave by the hand of the Almighty.

Reception of Christianity among this class of Jews and their proselytes.

On the first succeeding Pentecost after this awful fact was reported to have occurred, the doctrines and pretensions of the disciples of this risen Jesus had been propounded to a concourse of Jews and proselytes, assembled at Jerusalem from all quarters of the world. Sojourners at Rome had returned there full of the solemn tidings, and from that time the peculiar character of the new revelation, as the announcement of a spiritual, not a temporal deliverance, had been circulated from mouth to mouth among the Jews of the capital. By some among them such a view, as we have seen, might be entertained with favour though by others it would be abhorred as treason to the national cause. At first, however, there would be no question in any quarter, of the abandonment

of ancient rites and usages. If a few more ardent or more tender spirits were at once captivated by the first shadowing forth of true Christian liberty, they would not dream as yet of seceding from the rest on matters of religious discipline. They would join with their brethren in urging upon their foreign proselytes that entire submission to the Hebrew law which was demanded, not often successfully, by the strictest adherents of the old belief. Again, year by year, visitors from this Jewish society would arrive at Jerusalem, and from them the Christian Church, now beginning to take a specific form in the place of its origin, would learn that a small knot of inquirers in the distant capital had accepted their announcement of the Messiahship of Jesus, and were ripe for further instruction in the mysteries of his faith. At last, in the fulness of time, the greatest of their teachers, Paul, the eloquent and the learned, addressed this little flock in a letter of spiritual admonition, which laid, in fact, the real foundation of Christianity in Rome.

Special applicability to them of St. Paul's teaching in the Epistle to the Romans.

Now, supposing the people to whom this missive was directed to be, as I have here represented them, Jews and Greeks, retainers of aristocratic households, clients, for instance, of the great Narcissus and even of the emperor himself, to none could the warning with which it commences, of the fearful depths of vice to which heathenism had fallen, have been more peculiarly appropriate. On none could the general scope of its argument, that the Gospel was given to the Jews first, the teachers, and next to the Greeks, the proselytes, of the Roman synagogue, tell with greater effect. That circumcision was not essential, that the works of the law were ineffectual, that faith and grace are the foundations of a true Christian calling, —such would be the topics uppermost in the mind of a preacher to thoughtful and perplexed believers, anxious to conform to the old ways in all things, but

unable to enforce conformity upon their foreign adherents. And lastly, the exhortation to remain subject to the higher powers would speak with emphasis to that class among the Jews who had hitherto kept aloof from the intrigues of their impatient countrymen, and proclaimed themselves obedient in everything, first to their own patrons and masters, and next to the political authorities under which they lived.[1] The Epistle to the Romans is, I conceive, especially addressed to the godly few of that patrician following, half Jew, half Grecian, who were feeling their way still timidly and doubtfully to belief in Jesus of Nazareth, the son of God, the true Messiah, the founder of the spiritual kingdom of Israel.[2]

This epistle, written in the East in the year 811 (A.D. 58), was followed, after an interval, perhaps, of three years, by the arrival of the apostle himself at Rome. He came in bonds. He had been seized and nearly killed by his countrymen at Jerusalem, for preaching the true Messiah. He had been accused by them to the Romans as a mover of sedition. But he had proclaimed himself a Roman citizen, had appealed to Cæsar, and, though brought as a prisoner to the imperial tribunal, he came under the protection of the government.[3] At Rome, he avowed, no doubt,

Arrival of St. Paul in Rome. A. D. 61. A. U. 814.

[1] *Romans*, i. 8. foll., i. 16., iii. 25. foll., xiii. 1. foll. "They that are of the household of Narcissus" (xvi. 11.) are mentioned along with the others of whom so many appear to have been "of Cæsar's household." It is reasonable to infer that this Narcissus is the favourite of Claudius. His freedmen and dependents might popularly retain the title of his "household" even after his own death.

[2] On this supposition the remarkable compliment, if I may so call it, to this congregation, that *their faith was spoken of throughout the world* (*Rom.* i. 8.), receives an apt explanation. The disposition of these conspicuous freedmen towards Christianity would be reported to the family of the procurator in Judea, and thence would doubtless be published abroad as an important fact among the Jews and Christians everywhere.

[3] The exact dates of these events are not important to this his-

his real character as a teacher of a harmless doctrine, already known, and not unfavourably, in the highest quarters; and though long detained untried, through the indolence, probably, of the emperor, he suffered no other inconvenience. He was guarded by the prætorians within the precincts of the palace, lodged in a hired cabin attached, it may be supposed, to its outer courts, such as those commonly occupied by the retainers of a noble patron; free access to him was allowed to his compatriots and co-religionists, and for two years he was employed in preaching and extending the faith even among the members of Cæsar's household.[1] Of the perfect security with which the Gospel of the true Christ was professed at this time at Rome there can be no question. To account for it some have supposed an intimacy between Paul and the prefect Burrhus, or the minister Seneca, and the writ-

tory. I have followed the opinions which seemed to me on the whole the best supported.

[1] The phrase in *Phil.* i. 13., ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ, as is well known, has been diversely interpreted, of the emperor's palace, and of the camp of the prætorians. I incline to the former interpretation. St. Paul, we must remember, speaks as a foreigner. In the provinces the emperor was known, not as Princeps, but as Imperator. In Judea, governed more immediately by him through the imperial procurators, he would be more exclusively regarded as a military chief. The soldier, to whom the apostle was attached with a chain, would speak of him as his general. When Paul asked the centurion in charge of him, "Where shall I be confined in Rome?" the answer would be, "In the prætorium," or the quarters of the general. When led, as perhaps he was, before the emperor's tribunal, if he asked the attending guards, "Where am I?" again they would reply, "In the prætorium." The emperor was protected in his palace by a body-guard, lodged in its courts and standing sentry at its gates: and accordingly they received the name of "prætorians." After the establishment of a camp for this body-guard outside the city, a cohort was still kept always in attendance on the emperor's person, and in his principal residence, and this accordingly in military language continued, I conceive, to bear the title familiar to the soldiers. The palace, like other patrician mansions, was surrounded by numerous cabins, tenanted by the retainers of the great man himself, and in one of these, as "a hired house," the apostle was permitted to dwell, from the favour perhaps in which his nation was held, instead of being cast into the vaults beneath the palace floors.

ings of the apostle and the philosopher present certainly some striking points of apparent sympathy. At a later period it was gravely asserted among the new sect, that Tiberius, on the official statements of Pontius Pilate, had acknowledged the divinity of the culprit whom the procurator had crucified, and had demanded divine honours from the senate for the Founder of Christianity. These the senate, it was said, declined to sanction: the emperor, however, insisted that the Christians should be allowed at least a full toleration.[1] The story itself, as told by Tertullian, is probably groundless throughout; but it shows at least, and such is the purpose for which Tertullian cites it, that the early indulgence of the government to Christianity was an admitted fact which challenged explanation. Whatever may be the value of these traditions, the opposition in which the true believers stood to the assertors of false and temporal Messiahs would be alone a sufficient motive for the favour they manifestly received.

Story of Pomponia Græcina in illustration of the conduct of the Roman converts.

Nevertheless, there is no ground for supposing that, under the shelter of this indulgence, the young disciples shunned the genuine practice of their profession, or walked unworthily of their spiritual hopes. The faint traces left us by history may suggest a pleasing picture to the imagination of the life and

[1] Tertull. *Apol.* 5.: "Tiberius . . . . annunciatum sibi ex Syria Palæstina quod illic veritatem illius divinitatis revelaverat, detulit ad Senatum cum prærogativa suffragii sui. Senatus, quia non ipse probaverat, respuit. Cæsar in sententia mansit, comminatus periculum accusatoribus Christianorum." This strange story has been generally rejected as incredible by the best critics and historians. It may be remarked, however, that the official minute of our Lord's trial and sentence was no doubt transmitted by the procurator to the emperor, and was deposited in the archives at Rome. It was hence perhaps that Tacitus was able to speak so pointedly of the execution of Christ by Pontius Pilate: "Auctor nominis ejus Christus, Tiberio imperitante, per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat." *Ann.* xv. 44.

conversation of the first Christians at Rome, that little band of earnest and spiritual converts, first exploring by the light of conscience the rudiments of the new doctrine, then receiving clearer instruction from the letters, and lastly from the mouth, of the inspired apostle, strengthened by his presence, inflamed by his zeal, reasoning ardently with the more timid of their brethren, gradually overcoming the scruples of some, bearing with the prejudices of others, suffering patiently the scorn of the proud and worldly with whom they mingled, and presenting to their curious visitors from surrounding Paganism the first and purest example of zeal beautified by charity. Some minds there were at Rome which shrank with a rebound from the grosser forms of corruption thrust everywhere upon them; some which were softened to feelings of humanity by the general ease and tranquillity of the times; some, again, which warmed with spiritual emotions under the fervent teaching of virtuous philosophers: even in that sink of vice, under the flaunting banners of lust and cruelty, there was a preparation at work for the reception of Gospel truth, and the plain preaching of St. Paul was more attractive perhaps to many than the strange rites and mysteries of the Jewish synagogue. But the apostle preached to his disciples *in bonds*, and of the multitudes who came to hear him, *no man forbidding him*, the true children of Rome were themselves still under constraint of pride and prejudice, and dependent on the idols of society around them, from which few, perhaps, could wholly escape. Jews and Greeks might submit to the yoke of a crucified Redeemer, but conversion among the native Italians was as yet rare and imperfect.[1] To renounce a world

[1] A great proportion of the converts greeted by St. Paul in the last chapter to the Romans bear Greek names. They may have been Jews or other foreigners, but assuredly not Romans by birth. The same was probably the case of those with Latin names also.

with which it might seem impossible to mingle without defilement, rather than seek by active labours to purify it, would be the refuge of the grave and gloomy spirits which really broke through the restraints of law and custom to join themselves to a divine Saviour. The story of Pomponia Græcina, supposed by many to have been one of these Roman believers, may be taken at least in illustration of the form which belief might be expected to assume among a reserved and sensitive people, disdaining the spirit of proselytism, and ashamed to the last of rejecting their domestic and national ideas. This noble matron, the wife of Aulus Plautius, the conqueror of Britain, was, it seems, denounced to the emperor *as guilty of a foreign superstition*; a charge implying not merely participation in the rites of a licensed religion, but abandonment of the national worship, such as Christianity perhaps alone then demanded of its votaries.[1] Nero, from respect for a brave and loyal officer, or possibly from a feeling of indulgence, as above

Mr. Williams's attempt to identify the Pudens and Claudia of Martial (iv. 13., xi. 56.) with the converts mentioned by St. Paul (2 *Tim.* iv. 21.) is interesting; but we must not forget—1. that both these names are very common at the period: 2. that the name of Pudens in the Chichester inscription is only conjectural: 3. that the character Martial gives of Pudens is painfully inconsistent with the Christian profession. The Claudia of Martial was, he says, of British extraction. In our island, as in Gaul, many chiefs were enrolled no doubt in the imperial gens, and it is idle to assign this lady to any one British family in particular. At all events, the notion of Camden and Fuller, that she was a daughter of Caractacus domiciled in Rome, seems as plausible as that which derives her from Tib. Claudius Cogidubnus, the king of the Regni in Sussex. See, however, Williams's *Essay on Pudens*, &c., or an abstract of his arguments in Alford's *Greek Test.* iii. 104.

[1] Such, no doubt, should in strictness have been the demand of Judaism also: but there is ample evidence of the compromise which the Jews generally allowed to their half-attached followers and admirers. Herod, for instance, made no doubt conditions with them, like Naaman the Syrian, who stipulated that he should be allowed to bow, when he stood with his master in the temple of Rimmon. 2 *Kings* v. 18.

explained, towards the new sect, refused to entertain the accusation himself, and referred it to the domestic tribunal of the husband and his kinsmen. Pomponia was examined by lenient judges, and by their tenderness, their ignorance, or their indifference, was suffered to escape unpunished. But it was remarked with awe by the frivolous society around her, that she withdrew from all conversation with them, shrank into the secret companionship of her own pensive meditations, and passed the rest of her life, which was prolonged many years, in reserve and retirement. Such, it would seem, were the effects, most foreign to the spirit of the age, which might be expected from conversion to Christianity in a noble matron of Rome.[1]

St. Paul was kept under restraint for at least two years, but soon after that period was set at liberty; a further testimony, it would appear, to the acknowledged inoffensiveness of his sect.[2]

Outburst of the persecution.

Yet in little more than another year we read with surprise of the sudden persecution directed against it by Nero, and we hear that he was induced to denounce the Christians as the authors of the conflagration, to propitiate the popular feeling; for none others were so detested for their *strange and mischievous superstition*, or so generally held *guilty of the most abominable crimes*, of the crime, indeed, of

Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 32. (A. U. 810): "Superstitionis externæ rea:" an expression which has been very generally interpreted of conversion to Christianity. See Lardner, *Testimonies*, i. 344. The Romans, indeed, ascribed Pomponia's long melancholy to grief for the murder of Julia by Messalina, fourteen years earlier. Tac. *l. c.*; Dion lx. 18. It seems not unreasonable to suppose that sorrow turned her mind to spiritual consolations.

2 That the Apostle was detained at Rome for two years appears from the conclusion of the *Acts*. His release is presumed on the authority of tradition embodied in the early church histories, and supported inferentially by the Epistles. Supposing him to have reached Rome early in 814 (A. D. 61), he may have quitted it again in 816, the year before the persecution.

hatred towards the whole human race.[1] The horror of the sacrifice will be enhanced if we consider the position and character of its victims, such as I have represented them. They were not a base and turbulent rabble, like the mass of the Jewish residents, who had been more than once swept away by general edicts of exile or deportation; but a mixed company of Greeks and Romans, as well as Jews, some well-born, all perhaps instructed and accomplished, capable of appreciating the refined intelligence of the Apostle, all trained by habit, as well as by principle, to obey the laws, and respect the usages of those around them. Not only were men and women of gentle nature put to the most cruel of deaths,—not only was mockery added to their pangs,—but the process against them seems to have been more summary and informal than we read of in the persecutions of later times.[2]

Difficulty of accounting for this supposed persecution of the Christians.

Critical readers have, I believe, often felt a difficulty in accepting the plain assertions of Tacitus and Suetonius on this subject. They have remarked that there is nothing in the known habits and teaching of early Christianity to account for such infatuated hatred. If here and there a patrician convert vexed his kinsmen by withholding the domestic offering, such cases were at

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xv. 44.: "Per flagitia invisos . . . . odio generis humani . . . . sontes et novissima supplicia meritos." Suet. *Ner.* 16.: "Genus hominum superstitionis novæ et maleficæ."

[2] This may be inferred, I think, from the words of Tacitus, compared with later accounts of the punctilious observance of form in the proceedings against the Christians. It was only towards the end of the last and worst of the persecutions, that of Diocletian, according to their own confession, that punishment was summarily inflicted. See Ruinart, præf. in *Act. Martyr.* p. xxix., from Eusebius. Up to that time every judicial sentence had been formally registered, and Christian inquirers, when they found these fewer than they had expected, declared that the registers had been tampered with. Comp. Prudentius, *Peristeph.* i. 75.: "Chartulas blasphemus olim nam satelles abstulit."

least extremely rare, nor would they be noticed by the vulgar, whose clamours alone are recorded. The usages of the disciples were indeterminate in their outward form; their tenets were mostly subjective; there was little in either that could openly clash with popular prejudices. The first Christians at Rome did not separate themselves from the heathens, nor renounce their ordinary callings; they intermarried with unbelievers, nor even in their unions with one another did they reject the ordinary forms of law.[1] It would seem that they burnt their dead after the Roman fashion, gathered their ashes into the sepulchres of their patrons, and inscribed over them the customary dedication to the *Divine Spirits.*[2] They wore no distinctive garb like the professors of philosophy; they continued to dwell in the midst of their unconverted countrymen, frequented their synagogues and respected their sabbaths, at the same time that they paid special honour to the day which followed the sabbath, as the day of their Lord's resurrection. Before St. Paul came among them they can hardly have had a ministry, nor can we speak with certainty of any definite provision being made even by him at Rome for this distinctive badge of an independent religion. Christianity with them was eminently a doctrine rather than a ceremonial. They invested, indeed, with mysterious significance their rites of Initiation and Communion; and in the typical language in which the meaning of these sacraments was

[1] Mixed marriages were denounced by Tertullian and Cyprian; but not, as far as we know, earlier. The ceremonial of Christian marriage, the espousals, the ring, and other particulars, are derived from heathen usage, nor is there any trace of a special church service in primitive times. The passage from Tertullian, *ad Uxor.* ii. 8, 9., proves nothing to the contrary. Christians made it a matter of conscience to obtain the consent and blessing of the bishop.

[2] Such is the interpretation which, it seems, must be given to the letters D. M. (dis manibus), which occur so frequently on the tombs of the early Christians at Rome. See Muratori in the Roman *Acad. Archeol.* xiii. 39. foll. (Lightfoot, *l. c.*)

shrouded the heathens might find a motive for jealousy.[1] Nevertheless, such mysteries were common to the pagan cults also, and the misconstruction eventually put on them in the case of the Christians was the consequence, perhaps, rather than the cause, of the odium in which the sect came itself to be held.[2]

Christianity little noticed in Rome before, and for some time after, Nero.

The precipitate harshness, indeed, with which men and women of the world have judged the spirit of devotion in modern times, the sourness, the self-righteousness, the hypocrisy they have ascribed to it, may indicate to us the feeling with which such of the Romans as came personally in contact with this saintly community might regard its character and habits. They would express, no doubt more openly than our milder manners allow, their wonder, their vexation, and their scorn. But the atrocious language of Tacitus and Suetonius far transcends this limit, and we are lost in wonder at the charge of firing the city, with the general imputation of hating all mankind, against a sect so unobtrusive as well as so innocent. Nor can we fail to remark how short a time is allowed by our accounts for the growth of this hostile feeling. Up to the arrival of St. Paul the Christians form evidently an obscure and unorganized society; within three years from that date the whole city is filled with inveterate detestation of them. This is the more strange when we observe how little attention, except in this instance, Christianity attracted at this period in Rome. It has not been mentioned by

[1] As regards the Eucharist at least, the language of the Christian liturgies, which the further we inquire seem to remount higher in primitive antiquity, is more decided and uniform than that of the fathers.

[2] We do not know when the notorious calumnies against the Christian love-feasts were first propounded; but they are first referred to by the apologists in the second or perhaps the third century. See Minucius Felix, *Octav* 9.; Tertull. *Apol.* 3.; Athenagoras, 4.

Lucan, or the elder Pliny, though both these writers have noticed the manners of the Jews; nor by Seneca, though Seneca is full of the tenets of the philosophers; nor by Persius, though Persius is a shrewd observer of the salient features of society generally. Such is the silence of the contemporaries of St. Paul and Nero. Had the Christians occupied, even in the next generation, a large space in Roman eyes, could the painters of manners, such as Juvenal and Martial, who have dashed in, with such glaring colours, Jews, Greeks, and Egyptians, have failed to fill their canvas with portraits and caricatures of them?[1] Half a century had passed from the Neronian persecution before we meet with the first charges now extant against them.

Question as to the persons designated as "Christians."

Such being the grounds for questioning the accuracy of our accounts of this matter, it has been suggested that it was against the Jews, not the Christians, the devotees of false Christs, not the worshippers of Jesus, the wolves of the Transtiberine, not the lambs of the Palatine, that Nero's edict was really directed. We have seen how obnoxious the Jews generally were to the bigotry of the Roman populace: they were reproached with their ferocity, isolation, and spiritual pride; the turbulence of their fanatical Christ-seekers had already provoked both prince and people. The menacing attitude they held in their own country was a cause at this moment of increased exasperation. It was easy to imagine that the compatriots of the men who were levying war against Rome in Palestine had kindled a conflagration in the capital itself. Tiberius

[1] Juvenal alludes (vii. 257.) to the cause of Nero's persecution, and to the mode of punishment. Comp. also i. 155. Martial notices the fortitude of those who refused to sacrifice with the stake and pitched shirt before them.(x. 25.). This may refer to the later persecution of Trajan. There can be little doubt that this barbarous torture was invented before Nero (see Senec. *Epist.* 14.), and continued to be practised after him.

had gratified the popular clamour by deporting thousands of these wretches to Sardinia. Claudius had expelled them in a body from Rome. The people now stimulated Nero to make shorter and bloodier work with them; and the fanatics of the city were subjected to the same barbarous vengeance which had alighted repeatedly on their brethren in the mountains of Galilee and the wilderness of Judea. It is conjectured that our authorities, writing fifty years later, confused the Jews with the Christians. That Suetonius, in a previous statement, had fallen into such an error, is generally admitted. He may have done the same in this place. Tacitus, though a graver authority, is liable to the charge of colouring the events he describes with the hues of his own period. When he wrote the false Christs were extinguished and forgotten, but the true Christ had become notorious throughout the empire. The true believers, meek and inoffensive as they were, had succeeded, by an unjust fate, to all the odium which had popularly attached to the fanatics. On the Christians, regarded as a remnant or revival of Judaism, Tacitus, it may be supposed, bestowed all the bitterness which a terrible war had engendered in Roman breasts against everything Jewish.[1] They were lying at the moment under sentence of proscription by his master, Trajan: they were deserting the temples, withholding sacrifice from the imperial altars, meeting in secret and illicit conclave in the provinces, and Pliny, the friend of Tacitus, was inquiring how he should proceed towards them.[2] Whatever

[1] It should be noticed, to show how readily Tacitus might confound the Jews and the Christians, that he characterizes both in precisely the same remarkable terms. Comp. of the Christians, *Ann.* xv. 44.: "Odio generis humani;" and of the Jews, *Hist.* v. 5.: "Adversus omnes alios hostile odium."

[2] Plin. *Epist.* x. 96. (97.): a letter supposed to have been written in the year 104, probably a few years earlier than the later books of the *Annals.*

the historian may think of the charges of immorality calumniously preferred against them, their anticipations of a world-wide triumph, of the fall of the empire, and the dissolution of the age in fire, might be held as damning evidence against them, and entitle them in his view to a return of that scorn and hatred which they were deemed themselves to cherish against the whole frame of society.[1]

Conjecture of Gibbon.

Such is the view recommended to us by the great name of Gibbon, which it is due perhaps to his character as an historian to lay before the reader. Though liable to the suspicion of interested motives, he is too shrewd to advance even an interested argument without reasonable grounds. But the existence of Christians in the time of Nero is no longer held to depend in any degree on the testimony of Tacitus, nor does the conjecture merit in itself the disdain, real or affected, with which our polemics have generally treated it.[2]

Another view suggested.

For myself, perplexed by the received account, yet scrupling to admit such entire misapprehension on the part of our authorities, I crave a fair consideration for another suggestion:—that the suspicions of the Roman mob were directed against the turbulent Jews, notorious for their appeals to the name of Christ, as an expected prince or leader:—that these fanatics, arrested and questioned, not so much of the burning as of their political creed, sought to implicate the true disciples, known to them and hated by them, how-

[1] These topics had not been untouched by St. Paul; but it will be readily conceived that it was after the fall of Jerusalem and the publication of the Apocalypse that they became most prominent, and began to attract the notice of the heathens. Dr. Milman, feeling the difficulty which attaches to our accounts of the Neronian persecution, has suggested that the popular hatred towards the Christians, and belief in their guilt, were caused by their vaunts of an impending conflagration of the world. *Hist. of Christianity*, ii. 37.

[2] Gibbon, *Decl. and Fall*, ch. xvi.

ever obscure and inoffensive in Roman eyes, in the same charge[1]:—that the true Christians, thus associated in the charge of Christ-worship, avowed the fact in their own sense, a sense which their judges did not care to discriminate:—that the believers became thus more or less sufferers, though doubly innocent both of the fire and of political disaffection:—finally, that our historians, misled by this false information, finding even in the public records that the name of Christ was the common shibboleth of the victims, too readily imagined that the persecution was directed against the *Christians* only. Frightful as this attack on the brethren was, it thus fell only obliquely upon them; it may be hoped that it was as transient as it was sudden. If we may draw any conclusions from the monuments lately discovered of the Claudian freedmen, it would seem that many of the disciples, whom St. Paul had greeted by name, died quietly in their beds. Though Christian writers have concurred in citing the Neronian as the first of their persecutions, it is remarkable that the Church has specified none of its victims among her noble army of Martyrs.[2] St. Paul himself is not supposed to have fallen on this occasion. Absent at the time from Rome, he returned there soon after; but in the epistle he wrote from thence within two or three years of this date, no allusion occurs to the recent sufferings of his disciples. The story that he was beheaded at Rome in the last year of Nero has been current from early times; but this tradition, however probable in itself, is attended with circumstances

[1] The animosity of the Jews of the old faith to the Christian reformers is strongly marked in the *Acts* of the Apostles, and recurs again in almost the earliest documents of the first apostolic age. See particularly *Martyr. Polycarp.* c. 13.; Justin Martyr, *Dialog.* and *Apol.*; Tertullian, *adv. Judæos.* Tacitus himself points to the betrayal of one set of victims by another: "primo correpti *qui fatebantur*, deinde *indicio eorum* multitudo ingens."

[2] Mosheim, *De Rebus Christ. ante Constant.* sæc. i. § 34.

which show how little it was connected, in the minds of the first Christians, with the theory of a general proscription of their faith.[1]

General religious toleration under Nero.

The notion that Nero's measures extended to the provinces, or issued in a standing decree against Christianity, though attested by some of the ancients and much cherished by many moderns, rests on slender and equivocal testimony.[2] It was one thing to indulge the momentary rage of the populace, another to establish the principle of religious persecution. There seems no reason to doubt that Nero respected the maxims of his country in tolerating generally all religions against which no public scandal could be alleged. The citizens were not restrained by law from practising foreign rites, provided they did not overtly reject those of the nation, and their conduct, even in this particular, was not jealously watched. The proselytes to Judaism, and even to Christianity,

[1] For the presumed date of St. Paul's martyrdom I refer to the statement of Jerome: "xiv. Neronis anno," *Catal.* c. 5. Cyril of Jerusalem reported that his death was caused by a quarrel with Simon Magus, Chrysostom that he was punished for having converted Nero's mistress (*Cave's Life of St. Paul*). That St. Paul suffered at Rome has been a constant tradition from early times (Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 25.; Origen, *in Gen.* iii.); but the argument from Clemens Romanus (i. 5., possibly the original authority for it) seems to me mere trifling. A Regius professor of divinity ought not to sanction the translation of *μαρτυρήσας ἐπὶ τῶν ἡγουμένων*, martyrium subiens sub *præfectis Urbis*; and a learned chronologer's illustration of the phrase by the *δύο αὐτοκράτορος* (Helius and Nero) of Dion, is an ingenious extravagance. Perhaps a cautious inquirer will be satisfied with the language of the apostle himself (2 *Tim.* iv. 6—16.), which indicates the expectation of speedy martyrdom, and may itself have suggested the ecclesiastical tradition.

[2] That the persecution extended to the provinces is first asserted by Orosius (vii. 71.). This notion is considered to be amply refuted by Dodwell (*Diss. Cypr.* xi.). See Gieseler, *Eccl. Hist.* i. 1. 28. The Lusitanian inscription is given up. That Nero issued a standing decree against Christianity, which continued to be the law of the empire, is roundly asserted by Tertullian (*ad Nation.* i. 7.), a writer prone to misinterpret facts to the advantage of his own argument.

might possibly evade the required solemnities; the magistrates were lax, the bystanders were indifferent. As yet we meet with no indication of that uneasy apprehension of spiritual emotions, expressed by the specific inhibition of new and strange religions *by which the minds of men may be moved*, which marked a later period of Roman jurisprudence.[1] Toleration, indeed, on such a basis, constitutes no claim to a prudent liberality on the part of the Roman government. It was rather an unreflecting persistence in habits of thought derived from another state of society. The toleration of the empire was a relic of the proud exclusiveness of primitive ages, which never contemplated the possibility of the sons of Mars and Rhea deigning to bow before the gods of enemies and strangers; which had no fear of innovation, nor appreciated the risks of conversion. The government indulged in indolent security while the foundations of the old ideas were crumbling away. The active growth of Christianity first opened the eyes of rulers and people. The sword had been long suspended over the Christians; sometimes it had descended, and the disciples, always insecure, had been made to suffer; but whenever the jealousy of the state was awakened, no special edict was required to drag them before the altar of Jupiter, and invite them to sprinkle it with incense, and conceive a vow to the genius of the emperor.[2]

[1] Paul. *Sentent.* v. 21. 2. "Novæ et usu incognitæ, quibus mentes hominum moveantur."

[2] The fact that Nero's was the first persecution, the barbarities attending it, possibly also the notoriety given to it by the narrative of Tacitus, impressed later generations of Christians with a peculiar horror of this tyrant. But the notion that he was the Antichrist of the Apocalypse, and that he should return in power from the Euphrates (xiii. 3., xvi. 12., xvii. 8. 16; comp. Neander, *Pflanzung und Leitung*, p. 480.), cannot be traced to primitive times. The date of the pseudo-Sibylline oracle, εἶτ' ἀνακάμψει ἰσάζων θεῷ αὐτόν is very uncertain. St. Augustine (*Civ. Dei.* xx. 19.) speaks of the belief as common, but not universal, in his day: "Nonnulli ipsum resurrec-

The government of Nero supported by the voluptuousness and cruelty of the age.

The Roman Empire, at this epoch, was like one of the statues so common at the time, in which a new head had been fitted to the original trunk; and as the sculptor, passing his finger-nail along the marble, assured himself that the juncture was not sensible to the touch, so the citizens might believe, under the wide-spread liberty of thought they actually enjoyed, that the fatal severance between freedom and despotism was not to be detected by the nicest organs.[1] But beneath the more refined and sensitive classes of the capital, those which claimed the privilege of thought and knew how to use it, lay next the multitude of triflers and idlers, the rich voluptuaries, the pampered officials, the upstart freedmen of the emperor and his courtiers, who, environed as they were with perils, endured the tyranny of the Cæsars for the sake of their own ease and luxury, and were content to enjoy the present hour without regard to the past or the future. Minds enervated by indulgence, shattered by vice, estranged from all high and pure aspirations by the pleasures of sense, were unable to cope with despotism: these men could only crouch like dogs under the uplifted arm of their master; they had not energy even to fly from it. Whatever indignation they might feel towards the tyrant, they could only vent it in spiteful demonstrations against his creatures; and he could at any time avert their murmurs from himself by throwing to them a victim from his own court or household. Then was revealed on the public stage of history the secret to which the interior of every private house could testify, of the fearful union which may subsist between soft voluptuous manners and callous ferocity of disposition.

turum, et futurum Anti-Christum suspicantur." Comp. Lactantius, *de Mort. Persecut.* c. 2., and some verses of Commodianus, possibly of the third century.

[1] Pers. *Sat.* i. 64.: "Ut per læve severos Effundat junctura ungues."

Then the men whose own muscles were flaccid with the abuse of the bath, the table, and the couch, were seen to gloat with horrid fascination over the pangs of physical suffering they wantonly inflicted. The cruelty of the women vied with that of the men. To these cynical sensualists, with a depravity of feeling unfortunately not uncommon, the spectacle of virtue tormented would be a positive enjoyment; and there is too much reason to apprehend that by them the despotism of a Nero was supported for the gratification it ministered to their fiendish maliciousness.

Reflections on the depraved morality of the age.

The corrupt morality of the age, pervading all ranks and classes, was, above all, the cause of the patient endurance of tyranny which so lamentably distinguished it. With the loss of self-respect engendered by merely selfish indulgences men lose that keen sense of wrong, even when inflicted on themselves, which nerves, the hand of resistance more vigorously than fear or pain. The distrust which the victim of Tiberius and Nero conceived for all around him, from the consciousness of his own turpitude, paralysed every attempt at combination. The vices common to all great cities flourished with rank luxuriance in the capital of a society thus depraved and soulless. Sensuality in its most degrading forms pervaded all classes, and was fostered by the publicity of ordinary life, by the allurements of art, sometimes by the direct injunctions of a gross superstition, to a degree of shamelessness which has made it the opprobrium of history. Doubtless the iniquities of Rome have been more nakedly exposed than those of modern cities by the unblushing frankness of its moralists and satirists; but their frankness or effrontery was itself a product of the licentiousness of the age: Juvenal would have cast a veil over the wantonness he chastised, if public decorum had seemed in the least to require it. The distinguishing vices of the great were meanness and servility, the pursuit of money by every artifice and

compliance: they had little of the sense of honour which forms an exterior bulwark even to feeble moral principles among ourselves. The poor, on the other hand, with their dearest wants and pleasures provided for them, were not stimulated to dishonesty by the dire struggle for life, or even by the thirst of advancement, which are at once the bane and the preserving salt of modern society. But they were brutal, bloodthirsty, callous to the infliction of pain, familiar in daily life with cruelties such as we shudder to hear of in modern times under the influence of violent passions, in the momentary excesses of popular outbreaks. Much candour and discrimination are required in comparing the sins of one age with those of another, still more in pronouncing between them, especially where the hideousness of the subject must deter us from dragging them fully into light: but we must not be led to lay upon Pagan Idolatry too large a share of the reproach from which even true religion has not been exempted; for Christianity, divine as it is in its precepts and its sanctions, has proved but weak in contending against the passions of our corrupt nature: the cruelty of our Inquisitions and sectarian persecutions, of our laws against sorcery, our serfdom and our slavery; the petty fraudulence we tolerate in almost every class and calling of the community; the bold front worn by our open sensuality; the deeper degradation of that which is concealed; all these leave us little room for boasting of our modern discipline, and must deter the thoughtful inquirer from too confidently contrasting the morals of the old world and the new.

Counteracting principles of virtue.

The fairest, perhaps, and certainly the most pleasing comparison we can make between modern and ancient civilization, between the effect of a divine and a human teaching, lies in the virtues they may seem respectively to have fostered: for we must not forget that even under heathen-

ism there was always a moral teaching at work, and amidst all the incentives to vice, instruction was never wanting in virtue. However feebly the voice of religion or philosophy may have fallen on the ears of the multitude, the circumstances of daily life read constant lessons in love and honesty. Human nature indeed, like running water, has a tendency to purify itself by action; the daily wants of life call forth corresponding duties, and duties daily performed settle into principles, and ripen into graces. Even at Rome in the worst of times, men of affairs, particularly those in middle stations, most removed from the temptations of luxury and poverty, were in the habitual practice of integrity and self-denial; mankind had faith in the general honesty of their equals, in the justice of their patrons, in the fidelity of their dependents: husbands and wives, parents and children, exercised the natural affections, and relied on their being reciprocated: all the relations of life were adorned in turn with bright instances of devotion, and mankind transacted their business with an ordinary confidence in the force of conscience and right reason. The steady development of enlightened legal principles conclusively proves the general dependence upon law as a guide and corrector of manners. In the camp however, more especially, as the chief sphere of this purifying activity, the great qualities of the Roman character continued to be plainly manifested. The history of the Cæsars presents to us a constant succession of brave, patient, resolute, and faithful soldiers, men deeply impressed with a sense of duty, superior to vanity, despisers of boasting, content to toil in obscurity and shed their blood at the frontiers of the empire, unrepining at the cold mistrust of their masters, not clamorous for the honours so sparingly awarded them, but satisfied in the daily work of their hands, and full of faith in the national destiny which they were daily accomplishing. If such humble

instruments of society around them are not to be compared for the importance of their mission with the votaries of speculative wisdom, who protested in their lives and in their deaths against the crimes of their generation, there is still something touching in the simple heroism of these chiefs of the legions, of which we have met already with some bright examples, and shall encounter many more,—the heroism of a Plautius, a Suetonius, a Vespasian, a Corbulo, and an Agricola,—which preserves to us in unbroken succession the features of the Scipios, the Catos, the Æmilii, and the Marcelli. Here are virtues, not to be named indeed with the zeal of missionaries and the devotion of martyrs, but worthy nevertheless of a high place in the esteem of all who reverence human nature, which may prove, in the teeth of some thoughtless fanatics, that the age was not utterly degraded which furnished the first votaries to the Gospel.[1]

Christianity congenial to certain moral tendencies of the age.

The acceptance of Christianity we should consider not so much a strong reaction from the prevailing wickedness of the age, as a symptom of the aspirations struggling beneath its surface, and of its anxious demand for moral convictions. I have shown in another place that the Gospel was not embraced, on its first promulgation in Judea, by the despair of the most wretched outcasts of humanity, but rather by the hopeful enthusiasm which urges those who enjoy a portion of the goods of life to improve and fortify

[1] These remarks, I know, are liable to misconstruction, but it seems a duty to protest against the common tendency of Christian moralists to dwell only on the dark side of Pagan society, in order to heighten by contrast the blessings of the Gospel. The argument becomes dangerous when the treatment of it is unfair. The pretensions advanced by such an advocate as Count Champagny for the Roman Church, which alone he identifies with Christianity, to be the sole depository of all moral principles and practice, are distressing to those who reflect how fearfully they have been belied by the result.

their possession. And so again at Rome we have no reason to suppose that Christianity was only the refuge of the afflicted and miserable; rather, if we may lay any stress upon the monuments above referred to, it was first embraced by persons in a certain grade of comfort and respectability; by persons approaching to what we should call *the middle classes* in their condition, their education, and their moral views. Of this class Seneca himself was the idol, the oracle: he was, so to say, the favourite preacher of the more intelligent and humane disciples of nature and virtue. Now the writings of Seneca show, in their way, a real anxiety among this class to raise the moral tone of mankind around them: a spirit of reform, a zeal for the conversion of souls, which, though it never rose indeed, under the teaching of the philosophers, to boiling heat, still simmered with genial warmth on the surface of society. Far different as was their social standing point, far different as were the foundations and the presumed sanctions of their teaching respectively, Seneca and St. Paul were both moral reformers; both, be it said with reverence, were fellow-workers in the cause of humanity, though the Christian could look beyond the proximate aims of morality, and prepare men for a final development on which the Stoic could not venture to gaze. Hence there is so much in their principles, so much even in their language, which agrees together, so that the one has been thought, though it must be allowed without adequate reason, to have borrowed directly from the other.[1] But the philosopher, be it remembered, discoursed to a large and not inattentive audience, and surely the soil was not all unfruitful on which his

[1] It is hardly necessary to refer to the pretended letters between St. Paul and Seneca. Besides the evidence from style, some of the dates they contain are quite sufficient to condemn them as clumsy forgeries. They are mentioned, but with no expression of belief in their genuineness, by Jerome and Augustine. See Jones, *On the Canon*, ii. 80.

seed was scattered, when he proclaimed that *God dwells not in temples of wood or stone, nor wants the ministrations of human hands*[1]*: that He has no delight in the blood of victims*[2]*: that He is near to all His creatures*[3]*: that His spirit resides in men's hearts*[4]*: that all men are truly His offspring*[5]*: that we are members of one body, which is God or Nature*[6]*: that men must believe in God before they can approach Him*[7]*: that the true service of God is to be like unto Him*[8]*: that all men have sinned, and none performed all the works of the law*[9]*: that God is no respecter of nations, ranks, or conditions, but all, barbarian and Roman, bond and free, are alike under His all-seeing Providence.*[10]

Seneca's political and moral teaching.

St. Paul enjoined submission and obedience even to the tyranny of Nero, and Seneca fosters no ideas subversive of political subjection. Endurance is the paramount virtue of the Stoic. To forms of government the wise man was wholly indifferent; they were among the external circumstances above which his spirit soared in serene self-contemplation. We trace in Seneca no yearning for a restoration of political freedom, nor does he even

[1] Senec. *Ep.* 95., and in Lactantius, *Inst.* vi.
[2] *Ep.* 116.: "Colitur Deus non tauris sed pia et recta voluntate."
[3] *Ep.* 41. 73.
[4] *Ep.* 46.: "Sacer intra nos spiritus sedet."
[5] *De Provid.* i.
[6] *Ep.* 93. 95.: "Membra sumus magni corporis."
[7] *Ep.* 95.: "Primus Deorum cultus est Deos credere."
[8] *Ep.* 95.: "Satis coluit quisquis imitatus est."
[9] Senec. *de Ira*, i. 14.; ii. 27.: "Quis est iste qui se profitetur omnibus legibus innocentem?"
[10] *De Benef.* iii. 18.: "Virtus omnes admittit libertinos, servos, reges." These and many other passages are collected by Champagny, ii. 546., after Fabricius and others, and compared with well-known texts in Scripture. The version of the Vulgate shows a great deal of verbal correspondence. M. Troplong remarks, after De Maistre, that Seneca has written a fine book on Providence, for which there was not even a name at Rome in the time of Cicero. *L'Influence du Christianisme, &c.*, i. ch. 4.

point to the senate, after the manner of the patriots of the day, as a legitimate check to the autocracy of the despot. The only mode, in his view, of tempering tyranny is to educate the tyrant himself in virtue. His was the self-denial of the Christians, but without their anticipated compensation. It seems impossible to doubt that in his highest flights of rhetoric,—and no man ever recommended the unattainable with a finer grace,—Seneca must have felt that he was labouring to build up a house without foundations; that his system, as Caius said of his style, was sand without lime. He was surely not unconscious of the inconsistency of his own position, as a public man and a minister, with the theories to which he had wedded himself; and of the impossibility of preserving in it the purity of his character as a philosopher or a man. He was aware that in the existing state of society at Rome, wealth was necessary to men high in station: wealth alone could retain influence, and a poor minister became at once contemptible. The distributor of the imperial favours must have his banquets, his receptions, his slaves and freedmen; he must possess the means of attracting if not of bribing; he must not seem too virtuous, too austere, among an evil generation; in order to do good at all he must swim with the stream, however polluted it might be. All this inconsistency Seneca must have contemplated without blenching; and there is something touching in the serenity he preserved amidst the conflict that must have perpetually raged between his natural sense and his acquired principles. Both Cicero and Seneca were men of many weaknesses, and we remark them the more because both were pretenders to unusual strength of character: but while Cicero lapsed into political errors, Seneca cannot be absolved of actual crime. Nevertheless, if we may compare the greatest masters of Roman wisdom together, the Stoic will appear,

Inconsistency between his teaching and his conduct.

I think, the more earnest of the two, the more anxious to do his duty for its own sake, the more sensible of the claims of mankind upon him for such precepts of virtuous living as he had to give. In an age of unbelief and compromise, he taught that Truth was positive and Virtue objective. He conceived, what never entered Cicero's mind, the idea of improving his fellow-creatures: he had, what Cicero had not, a heart for conversion to Christianity.

Aulus Persius a teacher of Stoicism.

The advance of moral principles between the age of Cicero and Seneca is strongly marked by the favour with which the expression has been received that the Stoic was *enveloped, as it were, in the atmosphere of Christianity.*[1] We possess one other small volume of the moral teaching of the time, comprising the six satires of the poet Persius, himself also a Stoic, and a pupil of the Stoic Cornutus, the friend and probably the freedman of the family of Seneca. Aulus Persius was born in the year 787, and died in the middle of Nero's reign, at the early age of twenty-eight. Possessed of ample means, and with weakly health, he engaged in no public affairs, but devoted himself entirely to philosophical speculation, to which he did honour by the purity and simplicity of his private life. The fastidiousness, perhaps, rather than the ardour of his virtue urged him to step forth as a moral reformer:

[1] Troplong, *l. c.*, who cannot altogether give up the significancy of the phrase, "Seneca noster," so common with the fathers of the church. See St. Jerome, *de Script. Eccl.* c. 12.; Tertull. *de Anim.* 1.; August. *de Civ. Dei*, vi. 10. He adds: "Sa correspondance avec S. Paul, quoique apocryphe, ne vaut-elle pas d'ailleurs comme mythe?" I have already mentioned the coincidence of the use of "caro" in Seneca and St. Paul. Troplong says that "angelus" occurs also in its biblical sense in the writings of the philosopher. But the great subject of the presumed influence of Christianity on the moral teaching of this and later periods may be conveniently reserved for another occasion. M. Denis, in his recent work, *Idées Morales dans l'Antiquité*, has traced some Christian maxims far back into the region of heathen philosophy.

the passion of his contemporaries for verse composition suggested to him the vehicle of poetical satire rather than of prose dissertation; and his lucubrations, curious and not uninstructive as they are, have doubtless been preserved to us only by the accident of the form in which they have been conveyed. Of the poetical merit of these singular compositions I have no occasion here to speak: they have been very variously judged; but those who have criticised most severely their jejuneness in thought and general crabbedness of expression, have done scant justice to the smartness of observation and felicity of language with which they occasionally glitter.[1] In a moral point of view, however, they are not without their significance. A comparison of the satires of Persius with those of Horace may serve to mark the progress of the age in ethical principles. Horace shoots folly as it flies: his bolts are either flung at random for his own amusement, or, as I have elsewhere suggested, have a covert political object: there is neither love of truth, nor indignation at vice, nor scorn of baseness, nor a generous wish to amend error. But Persius is not a man of the world amusing himself with his fellow-creatures; he is a philosopher seeking to understand them, and still further, he is a philosopher of the age and school of Seneca, really anxious to instruct them. He recals men to true wisdom by showing not the sin or folly, or the evil consequences of their passions, but their inconsistency. Men and women, he lets us know, are not true philosophers: they say one thing and do another, in youth and age, in public and private life, in the street and in the chamber, with no intention to deceive, but from

[1] M. Nisard's judgment on Persius is harsh and unfair (*Etudes sur les Poëtes Lat. de la Décadence*, i. 201.). The passages from Boileau which he cites in comparison are sufficient to demonstrate the superiority of the third in rank of the Roman satirists over the first of the moderns.

defective education.[1] Genuine philosophy alone can teach them to choose the right path and to keep it: this is the training which makes men true to themselves and to society. This is a wisdom which it is in the power of every man to attain: and this wisdom he shows us by his own example is *Not harsh and crabbed as dull fools suppose, But musical as is Apollo's lute.* The philosophy of the Porch was never so persuasively recommended as by the charming verses in which Persius sings of the influence Cornutus exercised on his youthful affections, and the perfect harmony which subsisted in heart and soul between the master and the pupil, into whose purged ear he had instilled the fruitful seed of Cleanthes.[2]

No political philosophy in the writings of Persius.

It has been supposed that, in his strictures on the bad taste of contemporary versifiers, Persius has covertly reflected on the effeminacy of Nero's own compositions.[1] Be this as it may, it should be remembered that the poet was dead before the prince had made himself generally infamous for worse faults than those of style and sentiment. Nevertheless, it is deserving of remark that the sage, the moralist, the reformer, has not uttered a single word on the political aspect of the times; no breath of indignation at the servile submission of his countrymen, of consolation for broken-hearted

[1] Thus, the temple-worshipper is inconsistent when he thinks he can seduce the pure and holy gods (ii. 4.): the tyrant, who thinks himself powerful but is really the slave of his terrors (iii. 42.): the sick man who resents his physician's advice (iii. 88.). Every man pretends to be different from what he really is (iv. 23.). Men acknowledge the necessity of wisdom, but put off seeking it (v. 66.). They seek for liberty and fancy they have gained it, when they are really slaves to vice and passion (v. 125.).

[2] Persius, *Sat.* v. 45.:

"Non equidem hoc dubites amborum fœdere certo
Consentire dies, et ab uno sidere nasci. . . . .
Cultor enim juvenum purgatas inseris aures
Fruge Cleanthea. Petite hinc, juvenesque senesque,
Finem animo certum, miserisque viatica canis."

[1] Pers. *Sat.* i. 99. foll.

patriots, of encouragement for the few gallant spirits who still might hope for better days to come. Persius betrays no consciousness of the degradation of his countrymen, nor yearning for the recovery of their ancient liberties. A single allusion to the freedom of the Athenians of old suggests only the recollection of the deceptions practised upon them by their demagogues[1]: to the Senate, once the real bulwark of Roman independence, still something more than the mere shadow of a great name, he makes no allusion whatever. The philosopher, like the Christian, is content that men should work out the appointed end of their being under the circumstances in which Providence has placed them.

The "Pharsalia" of Lucan.

A more important contribution to the history of mind and opinion at this period, is supplied by the *Pharsalia* of Lucan, a work doubly interesting, both from its own peculiar merits as a poem, and from the fate of its distinguished author. Lucan, as we have seen, was the chosen companion of Nero's early days, being of about the same age, and showing much of the ready and brilliant talent which might charm a youth of Nero's temper and accomplishments. The stories that are told of their rivalry in poetical exercitations; of the success of the subject and the jealousy of the prince; of the taunts with which the one resented this jealousy, and the other's revenge by forbidding him to recite in public; finally, of the stifled wrath which led the offended bard to conspire against the tyrant's life;—all these may in the main be true, though possibly coloured and exaggerated. For my own part, I am disposed to believe that they grew out of an attempt to account for the change of sentiment,—as it

Tradition of the relations between Lucan and Nero accounted for.

[1] Persius, *Sat.* iv. 20.:

"Dinomaches ego sum, suffla; sum candidus: esto:
Dum ne deterius sapiat pannucea Baucis."

appears at least to an ordinary observer,—between the commencement and the continuation of Lucan's poem. We have remarked already the vehement strain of panegyric upon Nero which ushers in the great Epic of the Civil Wars: and when we consider that the author perished at the age of twenty-six, in the eleventh year of Nero's reign, we can hardly throw back the period of this dedication to the golden era of the Quinquennium. It must be allowed that the tyrant had already revealed much of the evil of his character when the courtier dared to canonize his virtues; if the stern republicanism of the poem as it advances was an after-thought, it cannot be excused on the common plea, that the vices of tyranny were undiscovered at its commencement. But, after all, this presumed change is a gratuitous imputation. To Nero himself, after the opening invocation, there is no farther allusion; and if, as the current of his verse rolls on, his appeals to the spirit of liberty and denunciations of tyranny become more vehement and frequent, we must not suppose that Lucan regarded the principate as a tyranny, or, till the last moment of personal pique or indignation, the prince himself as a tyrant.[1] It would be a still greater mistake to represent the panegyric on Nero as covert irony. Lucan was perfectly in earnest. The poem, as we know, was left unfinished at his death, and though the books may have been successively recited to friends, it was not, as far as we can judge, definitely published in the author's lifetime.[2] Whatever his cause of quarrel

Lucan not inconsistent in his flattery of Nero.

[1] Throughout the *Pharsalia* there is no stronger expression of republican indignation than in lines which occur towards the end of the first book:

> "Superos quid prodest poscere finem?
> Cum domino pax ista venit: duc, Roma, malorum
> Continuam seriem, cladcmque in tempora multa
> Extrahe, civili tantum jam libera bello."

[2] Collections of small poems such as odes, epigrams, and satires,

might be, I suppose that Lucan, had he deliberately changed his opinion on the necessity of a chief ruler, might have taken measures for expunging the passage in which it is so emphatically asserted.

Lucan a partisan of the senate, not of the people.

But we must not deceive ourselves. Lucan was a vehement patriot. He was an ardent admirer of the historic liberties of his country. He sighed from wounded pride and offended virtue, at the remembrance of the latter days of the republic, and believed that Rome had forfeited her appointed privilege of universal conquest since she surrendered the pledges of her freedom.[1] But what was the freedom he so fiercely regretted? It was the rule of his own class, the licence to enjoy the fruits of conquest claimed, seized, and jealously guarded by the nobles and senate in defiance of the rights of every other class of citizens, of the subject provincials, and of the world at large. Critics have asked, who is the hero of the *Pharsalia?* Is it Cæsar, or Pompeius, or Cato? It is none of the three, it may be answered; it is the Senate. Liberty and the Senate are for ever in the poet's mouth, as correlative terms; but he has no yearnings for the people; of the knights as an order in the state he never once speaks.[2] The Senate

were published in separate books; but we know of the *Æneid,* and we may infer the same of other works of similar pretensions, that portions were first recited to select audiences, but the poem reserved for publication as a whole. The same appears to have been the case with the *Metamorphoses.* The story that the first three books of the *Pharsalia* were corrected and published by the writer comes from an old commentary of no authority. They are in no respect more correct than the later books.

[1] Lucan, *Phars.* vii. 426.:—

"Sed retro tua fata tulit, par omnibus annis,
Emathiæ funesta dies: hac luce cruenta
Effectum, ut Latios non horreat India fasces;" &c.

[2] The complacency with which the Senate is assumed to be the governing order of the state is very instructive. See particularly the opening of the fifth book of the *Pharsalia* :—

"Docuit populos venerabilis Ordo
Non Magni partes, sed Magnum in partibus esse. . . . .

is his idol, its temple is the Curia, and its priests are the consuls; but he has no incense for tribunes and chiefs of the Comitia and the Forum. The idea he had conceived of the polity of the Republic was a dignified oligarchy of patrician nobles, born to sway the voters of the Campus from the steps of the temple of Bellona, to stride without partners or rivals over every province of the empire they had acquired by the blood of their plebeian clients. The descendants of the fallen oligarchy, in the ardour of their pretended patriotism, had completely forgotten the tribes as an element of their ancient constitution, and in their aspirations for the revival of liberty never dreamed of restoring to them any portion of their power. In the emperor's principate or first place in the senate they fully acquiesced; they did not grudge him his seat of honour between the consuls; it was of his tribunate, his championship of the people, that they were alone really jealous. The idea they entertained of a glorious revolution was not the abolition of the empire; they desired only to eliminate from it the popular element, and restrict it solely to a government through the senate. They would have suffered their chief to command their armies, as long as he held his command by decree of the senate, not by a law of the people. They would have felt it as no encroachment on their special rights that he should sway half the provinces as imperator or proconsul. Such of the emperors as had sought to gain the favour of the aristocracy had sedulously humoured these selfish views. Nero, following the precepts of Augustus and the example of Claudius, had sunk the

He had no wish to abolish the empire, only to subordinate the emperor to the senate.

Cunctaque *jussuri* primum hoc decernite Patres. . . .
Consulite in medium, Patres, Magnumque *jubete*
Esse *ducem*. . . ."

With equal complacency the people are left to Cæsar, v. 382. 392., &c.

tribune in the princeps, and accordingly Nero was long popular with the senators. It was not till he began in his caprice to make war upon them personally that he became personally hateful to them; but even then his government, still administered to a great extent by their order, retained its hold on their consideration, and the fiercest patriots among them never contemplated its overthrow. They might hope to remove Nero from its head, and to replace him by a puppet of their own; but even Lucan himself, the disciple of Cato, when he girded himself like Brutus with a dagger to take the Cæsar's life, had no thought of restoring the republic of free elections and popular magistracies. We shall find, as we proceed in this history, that Tacitus himself, a patriot of calmer judgment, was abundantly satisfied when he found the senate placed ostensibly at the head of affairs, and the emperors affecting to be no more than its hand and its mouth-piece. Under Nerva and Trajan the Roman liberals believed that they had recovered the days of Catulus and Pompeius.

Characteristics of Lucan and his contemporaries.

But to Lucan, after all, whatever it might be to men of more reflection and experience, the idea of the senate was a mere phantom, an abstraction of the imagination. Our poet was a youth, bred a declaimer of the schools, the child and pupil of declaimers and rhetoricians, and his mind had never been opened either by training or observation to views of actual life. It had become irksome to men of age and experience to mingle in public affairs which they were not suffered to conduct, and the young competitors for civil distinction were left without control to indulge the ardour of speculative opinion. There was no moral check on their thoughts, none on their speech: the new impulse given to popular composition by the advent of Nero to power raised a race of schoolboys to illegitimate authority in the world of letters.

Young Rome of the time of Nero was eminently conceited, and I fear eminently shallow. Placing Seneca at their head, as is the wont of the rising generation to shelter under a great name its own conscious self-distrust, the favourites of the prince, accepted at the same time as the favourites of the multitude, overbore the finest taste and judgment of the veterans of literature. The faults and vices of youth were admired, humoured, and stimulated. Reserve and modesty, persevering toil, patient self-examination, were regarded as irksome in themselves, and as a reflection on the character of the prince. Talent flourished in such an atmosphere, as in a forcing-house, but it was no climate for the natural ripening of genius. The wit and cleverness of Lucan, considering his years, are preternatural: the trumpet-tones of his scorn or admiration, after more than thirty years' familiarity, still thunder in my ears with startling intensity: but he has no divination of men and things; his imagination never clothes itself in the costume of the past; he is never transported out of himself; he never *saw* the conqueror of the Gauls; he never *trod* the plains of Emathia. If he is to be compared at all with the inspired singer of the Æneid, pensive, passionate, and abstracted, I know not what more to his advantage can be said, than the remark of Statius, that the Epic of Lucan was an earlier effort than the first prolusions of Virgil.[1]

Lucan's views of philosophy.

Next to Liberty Lucan chanted the praises of Philosophy, and his views of the one had as little of truth and sense as of the other. He proclaimed himself a follower of the Stoics, and no man has set forth their views, such as he con-

[1] Statius, *Sylv.* ii. 7. 73.: "Hæc primo juvenis canes sub ævo
Ante annos Culicis Maroniani."

According to the life of Lucan ascribed to Suetonius, this was the poet's own boastful comparison: "Et quantum mihi restat ad Culicem!"

ceived them, with more spirited and sounding phrases. If, however, we examine them, we discover in them all the vagueness and uncertainty of the teaching of the day; it is impossible to gather from the verses of Lucan whether the poet or his masters believed in the existence of the Gods, or moral government of the world. These doctrines are repeatedly asserted, and again not less repeatedly denied.[1] Fate, the idol of the Stoics, plays a great part on the Pharsalian stage; yet once, at least, the poet does not scruple to declare his uncertainty whether Apollo prophesies that which is fated, or fate is that which Apollo prophesies.[2] There is, however, in his view at least one manifest destiny, the law of nature which justifies Rome's dominion over the world. While he throws aside the old contracted notions of the individuality of nations, and affirms, with the emphasis of Seneca, the common origin and rights of all mankind, he never shrinks from the glaring inconsistency of his creed as a Roman with his creed as a philosopher.

His general deficiency in imagination.

Nevertheless this philosophy, crude as it is, has availed to soften his feelings at least in one particular. No Roman poet dwells with such warmth as Lucan on the sentiment of conjugal affection.[3] There is a sweetness in more than one passage of the *Pharsalia*, where it pauses on

[1] The *Pharsalia* is full of auguries, visions, and other testimonies to supernatural power: the author repeatedly invokes the gods; but he makes no use of mythological machinery, and more than once expressly denies the existence of a superintending Providence: vii. 447. 454.:

> "Mentimur regnare Jovem . . . . mortalia nulli
> Sunt curata Deo."

[2] *Phars.* v. 92.:

> "Sive canit fatum, seu, quod jubet ipse, canendo
> Fit fatum."

[3] Comp. the passion of Pompeius and Cornelia, v. 725–815., viii. 40–158., ix. 51–116. Even the sterner esteem of Cato and Marcia has a touch of sentiment and enthusiasm.

its stately march to indulge in a moment's tenderness, which little harmonizes with its author's general harshness, and may be taken as a tribute perhaps to the merits of a consort worthy of his genius, whose devotion to his memory was recorded in fitting strains by the next generation.[1] But this appreciation of the gentle influence which soothes most effectively the ills of life, is beyond the experience of youth, and shows a power of imagination in Lucan which we miss with regret in many passages of his Epic more brilliant in conception, and more sonorous in language. His general deficiency indeed in this faculty is most strikingly exhibited in the descriptions of physical suffering in which he seems to revel. His ever-recurring pictures of death and wounds, of diseases and famines, are coarse material painting, in which he only aims at representing vividly the scenes he has himself witnessed in the amphitheatres, or possibly in the streets of his own city. He has treasured up in his mind all the horrors which have been presented to his senses, nor has he the art or delicacy to create the effect required by generalities and abstractions. This is the common fault of young writers; it is to be feared, however, that it was eminently the fault of the age also; it sprang from the hard materialism engendered by sensual indulgence, from a terrible familiarity with objects the most painful and disgusting, and a cynical freedom of life and conversation.

Another feature of Lucan's *Pharsalia* is its affectation of encyclopædic knowledge, not perhaps character-

[1] Statius, *l. c.* 120.:

"Adsis lucidus, et vocante Polla,
Unum, quæso, diem Deos silentum
Exores; solet hoc patere limen
Ad nuptas redeuntibus maritis.
Hæc te non thiasis procax dolosis
Falsi numinis induit figuras;
Ipsum sed colit et frequentat ipsum,
Imis altius insitum medullis."

Comp. Martial, vii. 21.

isticof the man himself so much as of the period which boasted the vast compilations of Strabo's Geography and Pliny's Natural History. Astronomy and astrology, geography mathematical and terrestrial, antiquities and philosophy, mythology and navigation,—all these branches of science have their attractions for the young academician: wild and confused as his views of them often are, caught up from the teaching of many masters, and never as it seems digested in the mind of the pupil, they exhibit the appetite of the age for indiscriminate knowledge, an age of facts rather than of principles.[1] They afford a glimpse of the diversified subjects of intellectual occupation and moral interest which a world-wide empire afforded, when all the races of mankind, their climes and their characters, seemed brought into one focus. Amidst the material luxury and the rampant vices of the times, they show that there was still room for mental cultivation, which must have kept many hearts pure and single, and arrested the degeneracy of society. By literature, and possibly by domestic interests, Lucan seems himself to have been saved from the contagion around him. His poem, considering the atmosphere of voluptuousness in which he moved, is singularly free from all indelicacy of thought and language.[2] Modesty, indeed, was a tradition of the Roman Epic; vices which passed current in every circle of contemporary society are never

Affectation of encyclopædic knowledge.

[1] Among other passages the reader may be referred for Lucan's ideas of astronomy to ix. 531.; of astrology to i. 660.; of geography to i. 396., ii. 399., iii. 171., iv. 51., vi. 333., ix. 411., x. 268.; of history to ii. 69., x. 20.; of antiquities to ix. 950.; of philosophy to ii. 286., ix. 564.; of mythology to iv. 593., ix. 519.; of navigation to viii. 168.

[2] Lucan is described to us as a wealthy idler: Juvenal, vii. 79. :

"Contentus fama jaceat Lucanus in hortis Marmoreis."

He was born at Corduba in Spain, but of Roman parents, and neither his father Mella, nor his uncles Seneca and Gallio, betrayed the simplicity of a provincial extraction. The notion of Quintilian that his rhetorical style savoured of Spanish turgidity, and the compliments

so much as named by the singers of the life heroic: but that Lucan should exhibit the same instinct as Virgil, that Cæsar and Pompeius should be robed for us in the decent drapery of Æneas and Turnus, is much to the credit of the poet, and possibly of his age also. It would seem that amidst the general dissolution of principles some ideas retained their influence and enforced a religious self-restraint; wild as was the licence of the age, it had its recognised limits; a certain sense of decorum, however illogical we may deem it, still preserved its sway over the chartered libertines of Rome.[1] It may be added that while professed philosophers spoke with doubt and anxiety, and at best with faint hope, of the prospect of a future state, Lucan, faithful to the common sentiment of poetry, and the universal aspirations of unsophisticated nature, expresses at one time the popular belief in its existence, and philosophic conceptions of its character at another.[2]

of Statius to his native Bætis, are more fanciful than sound. See however *Sylv.* ii. 7. 33.:

"Attollat refluos in astra fontes
Graio nobilior Melete Bætis:
Bætin, Mantua, provocare noli."

[1] The purity of the *Pharsalia* is equal to that of the *Æneid*, and the same may be said of the later epics of Silius, Statius, and Valerius Flaccus. Lucan's moral perceptions are more just than Virgil's; bating some exaggerated expressions of vindictiveness, they are a very fair reflection of the teaching of his masters the Stoics. I must censure, however, his tenderness for the scoundrel Domitius, who dying forsooth, "Venia gaudet caruisse secunda." *Phars.* vii. 604.

[2] The scorn Lucan throws on the Druidical doctrine of transmigration, i. 455., implies no denial of a spiritual immortality. On the other hand, the reality of the future life, as a state of retribution, is strongly set forth in many passages: see particularly vi. 782., vii. 816., and the sublime canonization of Pompeius, ix. 1.:

"At non in Pharia manes jacuere favilla,
Nec cinis exiguus tantam compescuit Umbram:
Prosiluit busto, semiustaque membra relinquens,
Degeneremque rogum, sequitur convexa Tonantis. . . .
Semidei Manes habitant, quos ignea virtus,
Innocuos vitæ, patientes ætheris imi
Fecit, et *æternos animam collegit in orbes.*"

APPENDIX TO VOL. VI.

GENEALOGICAL TABLES.

TABLE I.

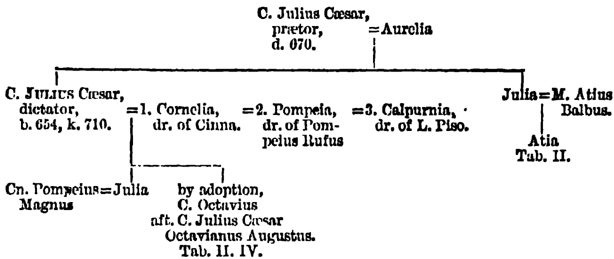


TABLE II.

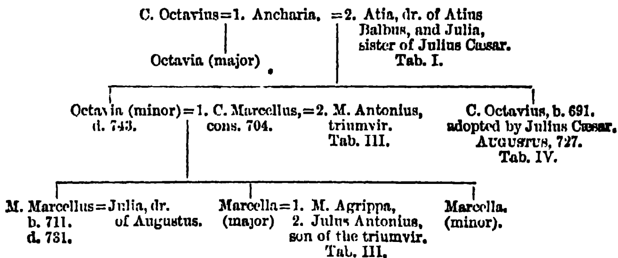


TABLE III.

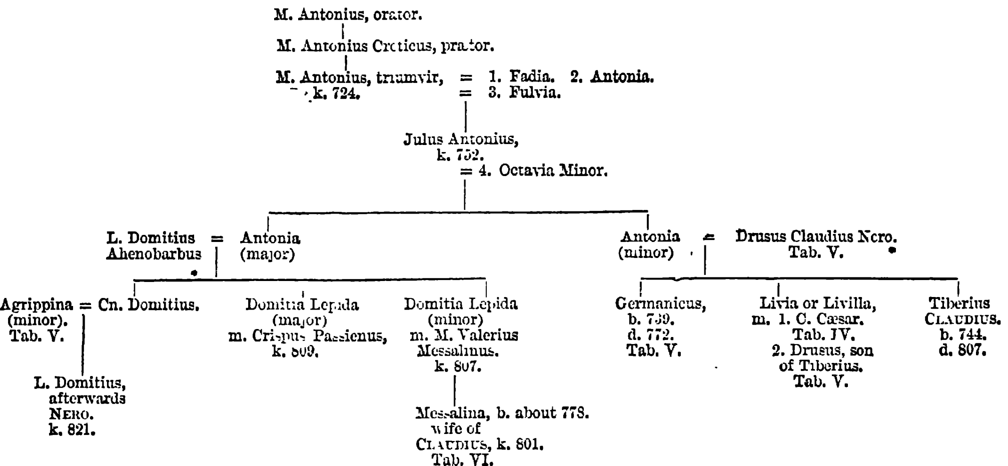

M. Antonius, orator.
M. Antonius Creticus, prætor.
M. Antonius, triumvir, k. 724. = 1. Fadia. 2. Antonia. = 3. Fulvia.
Julus Antonius, k. 752.
= 4. Octavia Minor.
L. Domitius Ahenobarbus = Antonia (major)
Antonia (minor) = Drusus Claudius Nero. Tab. V.
Agrippina (minor). Tab. V. = Cn. Domitius.
Domitia Lepida (major) m. Crispus Passienus, k. 809.
Domitia Lepida (minor) m. M. Valerius Messalinus. k. 807.
Germanicus, b. 739. d. 772. Tab. V.
Livia or Livilla, m. 1. C. Cæsar. Tab. IV. 2. Drusus, son of Tiberius. Tab. V.
Tiberius CLAUDIUS. b. 744. d. 807.
L. Domitius, afterwards NERO. k. 821.
Messalina, b. about 778. wife of CLAUDIUS, k. 801. Tab. VI.

TABLE IV.

C. Octavius,
afterwards AUGUSTUS = 1. Claudia.
b. 691. d. 767. = 2. Scribonia. = 3. Livia Drusilla.
Tab. V.

Julia = 1. M. Marcellus. Tab. II.
= 2. M. Agrippa = 3. Tiberius Nero.

a child,
d. infant.

Caius Cæsar,
m. Livilla.
Tab. III.
d. 757.

L. Cæsar,
d. 755.

Agrippa Postumus,
k. 767.

Julia = L. Æmilius
d. 781. Paulus.

Agrippina = Germanicus
(major). Tab. V.
k. 786.

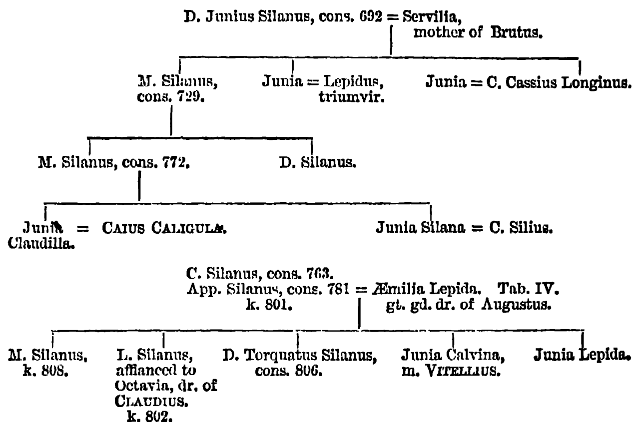
M. Æmilius Lepidus, k. 792.
= Drusilla, sister of
CAIUS Caligula, d. 791.
Tab. V.

Æmilia Lepida = 1. CLAUDIUS.
= 2. App. Junius
Silanus.

Table VIII.

TABLE VIII.

(From Smith's Classical Biography.)



END OF THE SIXTH VOLUME.

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